

CHANDAMAMA

FEBRUARY 1983

Rs. 1.75



Turn to Page 51
for the story of
Dawn of
Mughal Dynasty

PAZI



TINY TIM AND HIS 'SWEET' BAG

In the land of Poo, lived a giant called Big Joe. Big Joe was a very bad giant who frightened all the village children and gave the villagers a lot of trouble. So, one day, all the villagers got together and decided to ask Tiny Tim to come and help them. He lived just across the river, and was famous for his courage and wisdom. So, Tim came to the land of Poo, to fight the giant and help the people there. That night before his meeting with Big Joe, Tim made sure his sword was sharpened and his packet of 'Ravalgaon' sweets, toffees and eclairs, was filled. He just had to have his favourite 'Ravalgaon' sweets with him, because he loved their taste and they gave him confidence too! He ate an eclair before going to bed, and had a toffee, before going to meet Big Joe in the morning.

Big Joe was waiting for Tiny Tim and when he saw him, he started laughing. "How can a small fellow like you, fight me?" he asked. Then he noticed the small packet. Tiny Tim was holding. "What's inside that?" he asked. "Food" said Tim and started running. "Give it to me" said the giant, running after him. Tiny Tim threw a Ravalgaon sweet at the giant, and as soon as he bent to pick it up, Tim took out his sword and pointed it at the giant. Big Joe was scared. "Don't kill me!" he cried. "Promise me, you won't trouble anyone, ever" said Tiny Tim. "I promise. But may I get a bag of these tasty sweets, every week? They taste so good and I am always so hungry". Big Joe looked at Tim hopefully. Tim agreed. That night, the villagers threw a party to celebrate their victory and Big Joe was invited too!



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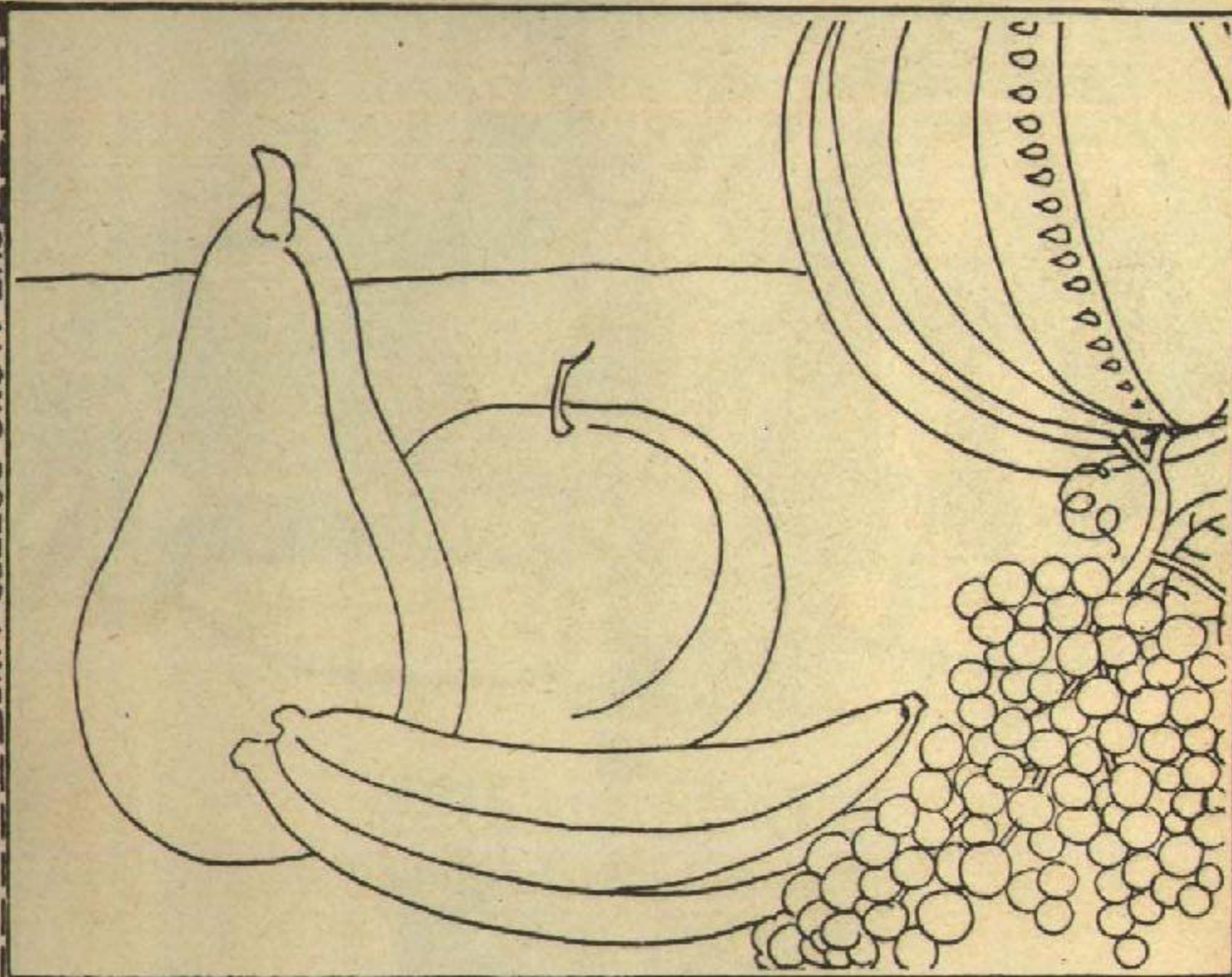
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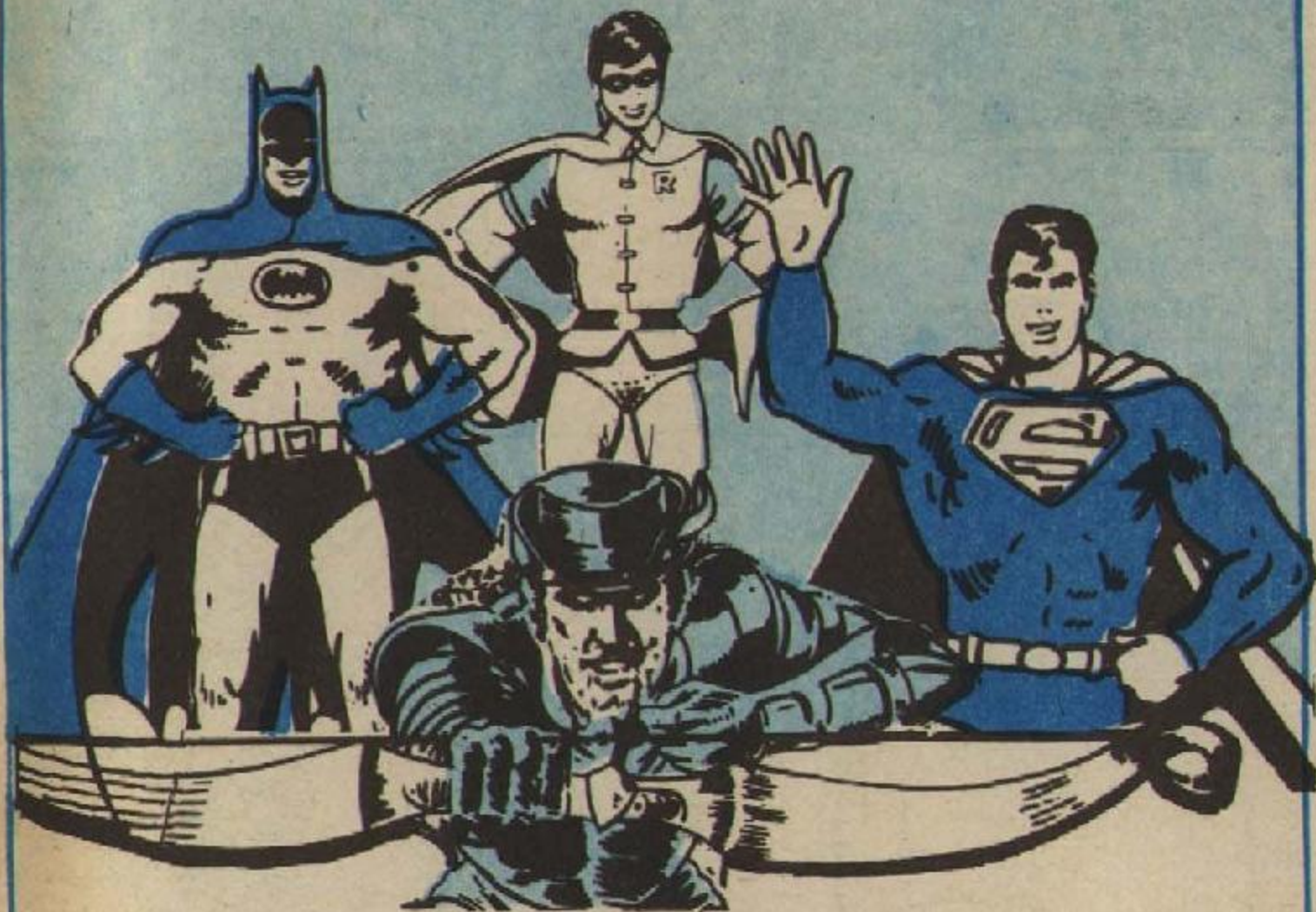
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CONTEST NO. 28



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NEXT ISSUE

- * *Story of Krishna: Birth of the Divine Child*
- * *K.A.Abbas recounts a legend in My Favourite Story.*
- * *Vanished into thin Air!—An Unsolved Mystery*
- * *The Secret Chamber—A Mystery of Mallipuram*
- * *Towards A Brighter Personality*
- * *Nature's Kingdom: About the age of animals*
- * *The Prince and the Pauper: Mark Twain's classic through pictures*
- * *A folktale from France, a parable from the Buddha Jatakas and story from the Arabian Nights among a number of fiction items!*



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IN THIS ISSUE

Mythology:

Story of Krishna

....Page 15

Stories:

The Parched Tongue

....Page 11

God's Pleasure and the King's Order

....Page 19

The Tortoise in the Palace

....Page 14

Plight of the Pilgrims

....Page 23

Cure for the King

....Page 32

Giants in the Himalaya?

....Page 39

The Fake Beggar

....Page 43

The Mortal who married a Nymph

....Page 46

The Hidden Treasure

....Page 55

Picture Stories:

The Prince and the Pauper

....Page 34

Dawn of Mughal Dynasty

....Page 51

Features:

Can we save the vanishing animals?

....Page 30

'Listen, my Son!'

....Page 38

AND Let Us Know, Newsflash, Photo Caption Contest and more.



OUR ASPIRATION

Our personality has broadly two aspects: body and consciousness. As is well-known, consciousness itself has at least two aspects: life and mind. But great savants tell us that there is a third aspect—the soul.

Our proper and balanced growth will be possible only if care is taken of all the four aspects of our being.

Chandamama aspires to help the young readers in their efforts at developing at least two of their faculties: life and mind. The magazine carries such articles that would please the readers, creative emotions (The attributes of life) and stimulate healthy ideas and thoughts in them (the attributes of mind).

And, in the process, if it can slightly help them discover their soul or true self, it should feel so much rewarded!

CONTEST A

THE BOOK I LIKE MOST is the subject for an essay of 300 to 400 words.

CONTEST B

Answer the following:

- i. How was the word INDIA formed? ii. Which book of India is the world's oldest collection of stories? iii. Which book in India is the world's oldest collection of fables? iv. Which one is the longest epic in English? v. Who is the foreign saint who came to India in the A.D. 1st century and preached a new religion?

An award of Rs.50.00 will go to the winner in each contest. Address entries to Editor, Chandamama (English) 188, Arcot Road, Madras-600 026 to reach the office on or before 15th February.



दूरेऽपि परस्यागसि पटुर्जनो नात्मनः समीपेऽपि ।
स्वं व्रणमक्षि न पश्यति शशिनि कलङ्कं निरूपयति ॥

*Dūre'pi parasyāgasi paṭurjano nātmanah samīpe'pi
Svaṁ vraṇamakṣi na paśyati śaśini kalaṅkaṁ nirūpayati*

There are people who are adept in detecting faults of those who are even far away from them, just as the eye is able to perceive black spots on the moon but not a boil in itself.

— Subhasitaratnabhandagaran

NEWS FLASH

The Dolphin in Need of Doctor

The Soviet trawler, *Ardamato*vo, found a team of dolphins accompanying it, swimming in a manner to attract the crew's attention, in the sea north of Japan. They soon found out that one of the dolphins was injured. They carefully let down a net and hauled it onto the deck. The ship's doctor carried on an operation. The wound was stitched and the mammal was gently lowered to the sea. For hours together all the dolphins swam with the sea as if to convey their gratefulness to the crew!



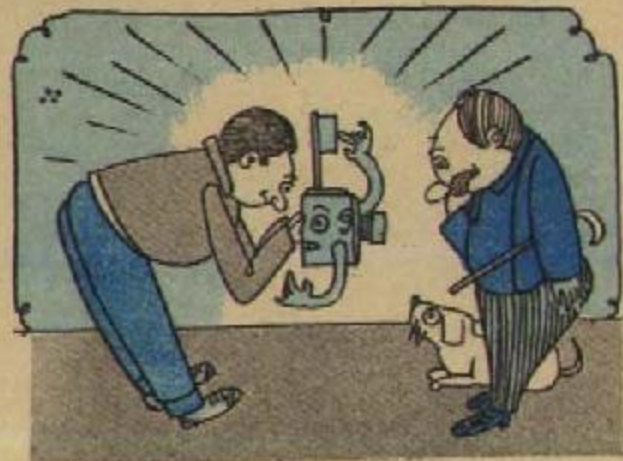
Teeth-Power!

John Massis, an Englishman, holding a rope between his teeth, pulled two double decker buses weighing together 22 tons, over a distance of two metres!



Talking Camera

"Use flash!" can be an instruction not from a friend, but a friendly camera invented in Japan. Through a large scale integrated circuit, it tells the user how to take a good snap.



Flying Easily

Perhaps the day is not far when individual flying machines that can be handled without any training are to be available.

Such a machine, called WASP 2, was recently demonstrated at Fort Benning, Georgia. It can rise to a height of a few hundred feet and can fly for a distance of about 50 km at the moment. (The picture is drawn from a real photograph.)



Cure with Flowers

At the Health Park at Baku, the capital of Azerbaizan, a novel process of curing diseases with flowers is at work. So far more than 50 thousand patients have benefited from the treatment. It was Professor Sukur Gasanov who had discovered the great power flowers have to combat diseases relating to heart, liver and blood-pressure.



Rock-Fans To Note

Are you quite fond of rock music? It is our duty to inform you what the latest research says about it. Experiments with plants in the laboratory of Temple Buell College, U.S.A., shows that plants exposed to three hours of hard work daily wilted, within a month. "Squash plants shrivelled up, philodendron flattened, and sweet corn crumpled."

Another series of research on guinea pigs at Tennessee University showed that four days of exposure to rock music caused many of the cells of the inner ear to collapse and "shrivel up like peas."





LET US KNOW

Recently I read in a newspaper that the "Statue of Liberty" in America is cracking up. What is the history of this statue?

—Susmita Sen, Natore

Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-tossed, to me:
I lift my lamp beside the golden door.



This is from a poem by Emma Lazarus inscribed on the pedestal of the Statue of Liberty. This is the best introduction to the significance of the statue installed on an island in the New York City Harbour.

The Statue was conceived by the French and made by the sculptor Frederic Bartholdi. It was a gift from France to the American people on the occasion of the 100th Anniversary of American Independence. The Statue stands on a platform that is 305 feet high and the height of the statue proper is 151 feet. In its raised right hand is to be seen a torch, the symbol of awakening of man.

The statue is under repair.

THE PARCHED TONGUE

—K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar

One suffers not only when one does not have something that one needs badly, but also when....

Well, find out about that other condition from this story based on a Buddhist parable, a story the author has never forgotten since he heard it when young.

Dr. Iyengar, one of the foremost literary critics of India, the most widely accepted authority on Indian writing in English, was the Vice-Chancellor of Andhra University and Vice-President of Sahitya Akademi. Among his famous works are **Sri Aurobindo: A Biography and History** and **Shakespeare: His World and Art**. He received the Sahitya Akademi Award for his biography of **The Mother**.

Anami felt thirsty, he felt empty, he felt drained of life. He moved up and down and looked in vain for relief. Wasn't it a well yonder? Approaching, and peeing into it, he found it dry, and spotted with weeds. Feeling disappointed, he walked further encountering trees small and big; but as he eagerly looked up, on fruit met his eye.

He walked on and on. At some distance, wasn't it a wayside pond? Anami felt a surge of hope, and hastened his steps. But no: there was only sand and broken earth, and no water. Maybe, he thought, there flowed an underground stream just below the sand. He knelt down, squatted, and dug a hole with his hands. No wet in



the sand, no softness. He dug a foot or two deeper; the sand was still dry and harsh. Anami felt tired and hopeless; he got up with an effort, and walked on aimlessly.

Meeting a stranger—a woman—bent double with a pot on her head, Anami felt a faint stir of hope again. Wasn't she carrying buttermilk?

"I feel extremely thirsty", he blurted out, "Can you help me?"

"Alas," said the old dame, "the pot is empty, I've done my rounds."

Anami's face fell: "Ah, can you at least guide me to where I can quench my thirst soonest?" he asked.

The good dame sadly answered, "It's a wrong place to look for water or shelter. But turn left and walk up to the temple in ruins; then follow the half-hidden footpath that leads from there and winds through the woods; you may be lucky."

Nodding his head in thankfulness, Anami resumed walking. Like a drowning man clutching at a straw, he decided to follow the woman's advice. The temple in ruins was a pitiful sight. Anami saw a disused tank filled with debris, rubble and rubbish.



He looked for the footpath, and found it with some difficulty, and wriggled forward cautiously. The overhanging boughs, the jutting thorns here and there, the rugged pathway, the crawling reptiles, the variety of denizens of the forest, all frightened Anami, yet the needles of his parched tongue stung him and made him move forward.

And he saw the word of fant. built by Nature. Where had he the strength to persist in his singular quest? Did he inhale some miraculous moisture from the woodland atmosphere that gave him energy? Perhaps he could munch the leaves dangling

in front, and extract a few drops of wilderness wet? But the leaves were dry, as if cast in metal. Though almost dying with exhaustion, he still didn't feel like pausing, lest he should lose the strength to resume the trek. Had the buttermilk vendor guided him aright? Or had she only sent him on a fool's errand? Anami presently blamed himself for the unkind thought about the stranger who surely meant to help him.

He muttered words that became hiss, and occasionally tuned themselves into a sort of prayer. A little strength seemed to trickle from somewhere; he seemed to be on a downward path. He walked with a new lightness, and suddenly—as if miraculously—he came to a stop, for there before him was

the river, and water spanned from shore to distant shore, and the mighty river Mahadevi flowed majestically towards the sea. Anami was in a daze and soon he was in ecstasy.

Seconds passed, minutes passed, and perhaps an hour; and still he stood facing the living and heaving waters, awed and transfixed and rendered immobile. Now the old dame happened to reach there too. Looking at Anami who seemed to be in a trance, she asked with surprise, "You were so thirsty, you seem parched still, but why don't you rush to the river and quench your thirst?"

And slowly and almost dreamily, Anami made reply: "Ah, there's so much water here, so much, so much; how can I quaff it all?"



THE TORTOISE IN THE PALACE

In a hut below a hill in China lived a philosopher. One day while he was bathing in a muddy pool two officers of the king met him.

"Good man, your days of wallowing in the mud are over. The king desires you to live in his palace, in great comfort," they said smiling.

The philosopher showed no reaction to the offer. Instead he asked, "Is it true that there is a dead tortoise in the king's palace?"

"It is true. It is the giant of a tortoise. It is kept in an ornamental case to be seen by visitors to the palace," the officers replied enthusiastically.

"Supposing that you were that tortoise, what would you prefer—to lie dead in that ornamental case for visitors to peep at you or to wander dragging your tail in the mud?" the philosopher put the question to the senior officer.

"Of course, to wander dragging my tail in the mud," answered the officer.

"Fine. I too would like that. You may go."



Story so far: While Princess Devaki, soon after her marriage to Prince Vosudev, was being driven in a chariot to the palace of her bridegroom, with the latter by her side, a voice from the blue warned Kamsa, the demoniac king of Mathura, that the eight issue of the princess would cause his death. At once Kamsa raised his sword in order to finish the princess off

2. THE TYRANT STRIKES

Stop, O Kamsa, stop!" cried out many a voice, aghast and horrified. Some of the men and women in the procession walking close to the chariot, who saw Kamsa's sword flashing in the lightning, swooned right away.

The crack of thunder that followed the lightning was deafening enough, but the roar that followed the sound surpass-

sed it in both volume and terror.

It was Kamsa's voice. He was threatening Prince Vosudev with dire consequence, for the prince had taken hold of the tyrant's right arm in time to prevent it from striking Devaki with the sword.

"What! Must I be a fool to allow the lady who would mother my foe to live? Should I





not nip the danger in the bud?" Kamsa threw his angry question at Vosudev, whose grip was tight on his wrist.

"Kamsa, how can you turn a blind eye to the situation? As the king, is it not your duty to protect the innocent and the helpless? How can you do exactly the opposite?" an old counsellor dared to take Kamsa to task.

"Don't blabber on with those nonsense. King or commoner, one must protect oneself first!" Kamsa yelled out his answer.

"Think for a moment about the example you are going to set, O Kamsa. Killing a hapless

woman—a sister—that too within hours of her marriage—and before a crowd of thousands—is bound to have far-reaching consequences. Never—never—will you find a human heart that will have any feelings of love or respect for you!" said a kinsman.

And said another, "You will go down in history not only as a tyrant but also as a coward. Any man with the slightest trait of nobility in his character should prefer death to living with the reputation you are going to earn!"

"Shut up!" screamed Kamsa. "Your goody goody words are no good for me." With a sudden pull he got his hand free from Vosudev's grip and raised his sword once again.

But Vosudev sprang up between him and Devaki. "Listen, my friend," he said. "Do not be impatient. Far way off is the prospect of our eighth child. I assure you, I shall handover to you not only our eighth child, but also all the other seven born before it for you to do with them as you like. Spare the life of Devaki and prove that you are indeed a king with a conscience!"

Kamsa paused. The exhorta-

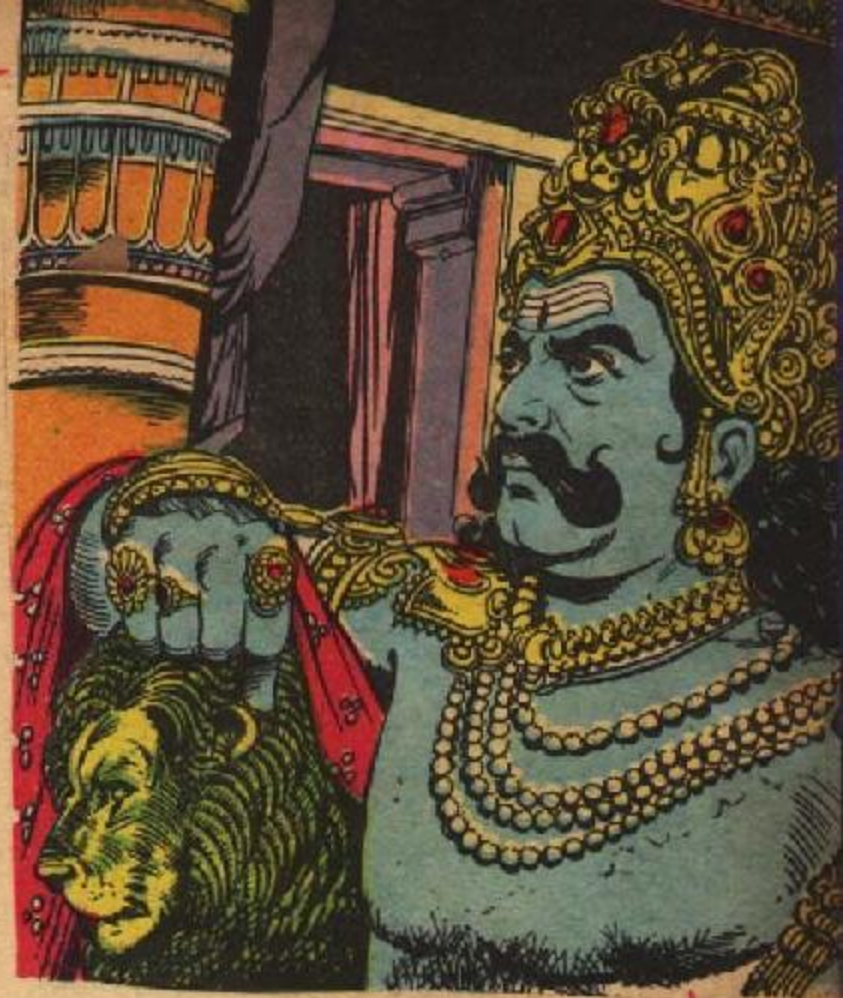
tions from the elders and the promise made by Vosudev seemed to have their effect. He looked at the silent multitude that had cheered him only moments ago. He could read awe and revulsion writ large on all the faces.

He put his sword back in its sheath. Fixing a stern gaze on Vosudev, he said, "People say that you are as steady in your truthfulness as the polestar is in its position. Thousands stand witness to what you have declared now. You must surrender your children to me, one by one, as soon as they are born. But I'll take no chances. Both of you shall live as my prisoners until Devaki has been delivered of her eighth child and I have done away with it!"

Kamsa got off the chariot and marched towards his castle in the opposite direction, followed by his closest courtiers and ministers.

The procession proceeded towards its destination, but a gloom had overtaken it. The music had fallen silent and hardly did anybody utter any word. The sobs of Princess Devaki were mingled with the sighs of the throng.

Kamsa proved in no time that



what he said was no mere threat. Devaki and Vosudev were thrown into a small apartment converted into a prison. Sentries were posted all around.

Days passed. Kamsa had lost the peace of his mind. He was growing restless and, as a result, more and more cruel. But for his few flatterers and sly chums, even his courtiers avoided him. He punished people brutally if they incurred his displeasure; he showed no respect to sages and savants. Pride and passion ruled him entirely and he ruled the country like a monster.

And he did not have a wink of sleep the night the maids attending



upon Devaki informed him that the princess was expected to give birth to her first child any moment. Although he had nothing to fear from the first or even the six more of her children to follow, he could not tide over the waves of anxiety that subdued him.

At midnight the chief of the sentries came running to him and said, "My lord, I've just heard the cry of a babe emanating from Princess Devaki's room."

"Go back and see to it that the security is tightened around the prison. I will be there presently."

But Kamsa was not required to walk up to the prison. The truthful Vosudev had picked up the child—a lovely son—and, without looking back, was on his way to meet Kamsa. Devaki, mad with sorrow, followed him.

Kamsa and Vosudev met midway along the corridor. "Here is our first child, my friend," said Vosudev as he placed the babe before Kamsa. "As promised, I submit it to your mercy."

"My brother!" cried out Devaki falling at Kamsa's feet. "Allow this innocent nephew of yours to live. He will serve you when he grows up. What harm can he do to you, the mighty king of kings?"

While Vosudev's truthfulness impressed Kamsa, Devaki's pleading pleased him. After all it was not her eighth child! He could afford to be merciful.

"All right, take it away," he said, waving his hand.

Tears of joy streamed down Devaki's cheeks. "You are noble, my brother!" she said, and the couple returned to their prison with the child.

* * *

"So kind and compassionate a king had never ruled the earth," commented a flatterer. "The court-poet ought to write an

epic narrating such noble gestures of our king," said another.

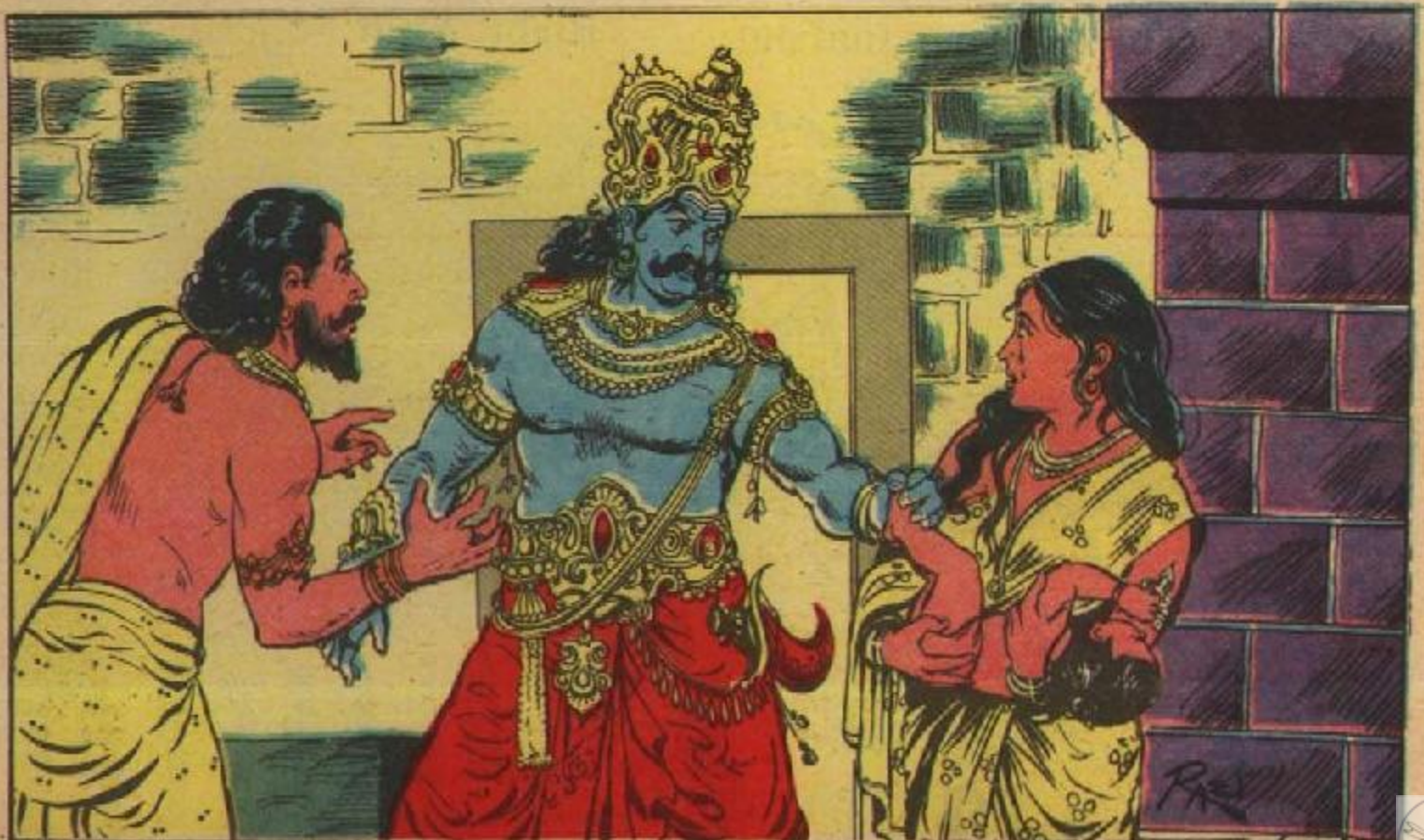
Kamsa beamed with pride. It was morning and he was in the company of his friends and flatterers. "What, my lord," said yet another flatterer, "great though you are for your compassion, should you allow that virtue to overrule your prudence? True, the voice of prophecy said that it is only Devaki's eighth child that will be your enemy, but who can say if the gods were not up to playing mischief? The foe might arrive earlier than prophesied! Is it not enough that you have spared Devaki's life? As a well-wisher I must tell you that it is

not advisable to spare her offsprings too!"

The cruelty of Kamsa, suppressed for a moment, sparked off. His eyes glowed abominably. Without a word he unsheathed his sword and made a dash for Devaki's room. Before the panicky princess had understood what was happening, he snatched her son off her bed.

Devaki shrieked in horror and fell unconscious. Vosudev looked on helpless. Kamsa went out to the courtyard of the castle. There lay a slab of stone. He dashed the child upon it—to its instant death.

Nobody dared to raise a murmur.



GOD'S PLEASURE AND THE KING'S ORDER

Once upon a time there was a king whose palace overlooked the state prison.

It was a moonlit night. The king was enjoying fresh breeze and a stroll on the terrace of his palace.

Suddenly he heard a cry from the prison. Someone said with anguish, "O God, should you have mercy on me, what can the king do?" The king got annoyed. He marked the room from which the cry came. At a clap of his hands his bodyguards came running to the terrace. He commanded them to go and find out

from those guarding the prison who that shouting prisoner was.

Soon they returned and informed him that the prisoner was one who had been condemned to death, awaiting execution.

"Fetch him!" ordered the king.

The guards dragged the prisoner out of the prison and shoved him onto the terrace and threw him before the king.

"What did you say? What can the king do if God protects you?" asked the king sternly.

"Right, Your Majesty, that is



what I said!" replied the prisoner.

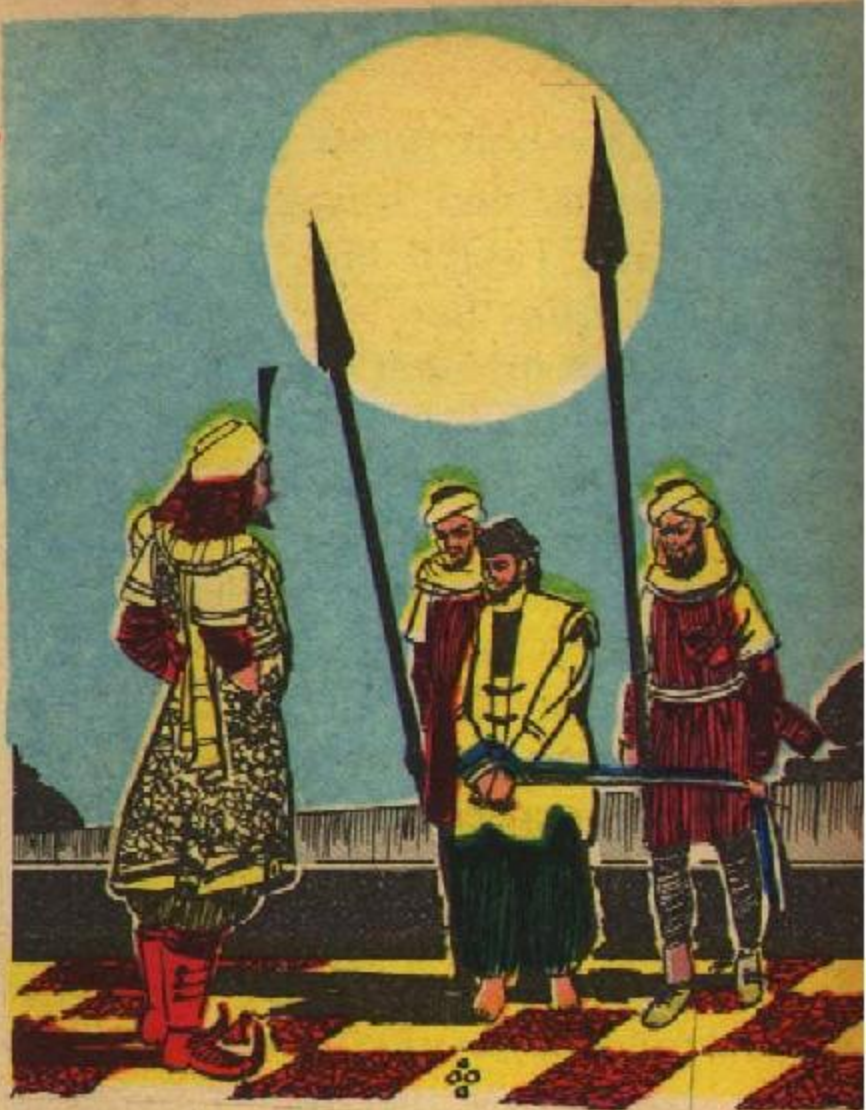
"You fool, how can God come to your rescue if I decide to put you to death?" asked the king.

"I can't say how, Your Majesty, but God can come to my rescue if He pleases. This is my faith. You may be the king, but you are only a human being. You cannot stand in the way of God fulfilling His wish," calmly said the prisoner.

"Is that so? You audacious fellow, I am going to end your blabbering right now!" growled the king. He ordered the palace-guards to lead the prisoner to the execution ground and behead him that very night.

The execution ground was outside the city. The guards led the prisoner, whose hands were bound, towards the ground. They carried burning torches. They had just been out of the city when they heard the sound of galloping hooves. A gang of bandits pounced upon them mistaking them to be travellers who must be carrying some valuable things and money.

The outnumbered guards surrendered their swords to the bandits. When the bandits saw an able-bodied prisoner, they



snatched him away. Perhaps they wanted to sell him as a slave.

The prisoner was made to sit behind one of the horsemen.

They rode through the desert and happened to pass by a forest beyond it. All on a sudden a ferocious lion descended on the gang from a hill in the forest. It was still dark. There was chaos with horses neighing and running for life in different directions.

The prisoner had his hands still bound. He could not cling on to the bandit behind whom he sat. He fell down at the jolt the terrified horse gave.

The lion thrust its teeth into his coat and dragged him into a cave. Taking him for dead, it left him there.

The prisoner's bondage snapped by collision with the rocks. He sat up and saw around him scattered skeletons. He understood that the lion dragged its victims regularly into that cave and ate them there at leisure. Although it had gone away it was expected back any moment.

The prisoner decided to flee the forest. It was already morning. Before leaving the cave his eyes fell on a leather bag lying in a corner of the cave. Obviously its owner had been killed by the lion.

He picked it up and saw what was inside. It contained di-

amonds. He also gathered some gold and money lying around the skeletons.

He hurried out and did not stop until he sighted a village. He buried the bag under a tree and went to the village with a little gold and money. He took lodging in an inn. He found out that he had crossed the boundary of the kingdom where he had been a prisoner.

He then went over to the nearest town and bought a house and set up a business. In five years he was one of the wealthiest men in the town. He wrote to the king who had ordered him to die: "For your information, God's pleasure cancelled your order!"



PLIGHT OF THE PILGRIMS

—Randor Guy

It was a fine breezy morning in Mallipuram, and Sidhanta gazed at the clear sky admiring the blue canopy over the earth. The sight of the vast expanse always fascinated him filling him with joy and the inexplicable mystery of the universe. He stood in his garden, feeding his cows with tufts of green grass. He loved animals and took personal care of them, in spite of his work as the minister to the King of Malli-

puram.

Someone coughed behind him, and Sidhanta turned to look. He could feel that the person was a man, from his voice, and also that he was deeply disturbed over something. Sidhanta was very observant and could draw conclusions from tiny details that eluded the grasp of even the smart ones in the kingdom. No wonder King Parakram loved him and respected him for his wisdom and



'native wit.

The man was Kedara, the chief of the Shanti Sena whose duty was to preserve peace in the kingdom and also take care of wrongdoers. Mallipuram was a prosperous kingdom and nobody was ever in want. There were no thieves and at nights people even did not close their doors. When certain wrongs were committed, the culprits were found to be outsiders.

"Yes, Kedara, what troubles you on such a fine day? Your cough tells me that you have a problem on your mind and you need help!"

"Yes, dear minister, you are right as ever. I have a problem and our gracious king, defender of the weak and destroyer of evil, has commanded me to seek your guidance and help, learned Sidhanta," Kedara said, coughing again.

"Dear Kedara, tell me all about it. All problems have their solutions. One has to look for them, that's all. Now, tell me. I am all ears!"

"Sir, you know our beloved king has recently built a new inn in the neighbouring village, Agravara."

"Kedara! I have been there,

with our king. Only the people there did not know about our visit!" Sidhanta laughed.

"Our king is great. May his tribe increase. You know, Sir, Agravara attracts many people, mostly holy-minded pilgrims coming to offer worship at the Shiva temple there. And they come with their children, for the deity is believed to be specially beneficent to children. Many of them stay at the new inn for it is closer to the temple. For some time we have been receiving complaints about children missing from that inn! It is a great pity that something evil should befall the children at a place that is specially holy for them!"

"Children missing? Sounds incredible, Kedara! However it must be true. After all, strange things happen in this world! You have caught my interest. Proceed Kedara, how did it happen?" Sidhanta ran his hands through his beard.

"Sir, our Shanti Sena had done its best, but we have not been able to find out anything. Before the matter becomes widely known, we must do something to stop its recurrence. Our beloved king is anxious to nip the mischief in the bud and he told me to seek your



help."

"Kedara, leave it to me and do not speak a word of it to anybody. Meet me after a few days." Sidhanta patted the Shanti Sena chief on the back with love and affection.

The inn at Agravara was spacious and comfortable. King Parakram had built several such inns throughout his kingdom for the benefit of travellers, pilgrims and wandering poets and singers. Free food and shelter were provided to one and all.

That morning the inn had two weary travellers comfortably settled in one of the rooms. One was Sidhanta, and the other was Sunita, a smart sweet girl of ten. She lived in the orphanage attached to the palace. The king maintained some such orphanages in Mallipuram where children without parents were taken care of and brought up to grow into good citizens. Sunita was one such orphan and her quick wits and intelligence made her the favourite of even the king. She and Sidhanta were disguised as ordinary travellers, and Sidhanta had walked all the way from the palace so that he would really be tired and not merely appear to be so! Such was his passion for realism!



Dressed in clothes slightly soiled, he walked around the inn, letting his eyes roam here, there and then everywhere. He observed Lochani, the big-eyed, fat woman who was in charge of distributing milk to children staying at the inn. There were many cows at the inn in the sprawling backyard, and Sidhanta watched Lochani at work. He found her stealing glances at him, and avoiding his lance-like stare whenever their eyes met! He also observed a team of maids washing the silver tumblers used for giving milk to children at night.

Came the night, and Sidhanta whispered to Sunita to bring her



share of milk without drinking it. She nodded, excited by the prospect of sharing an adventure with the wise minister of the kingdom. She sat in line with the children at the inn, and when Lochani served her the hot flavoured milk, Sunita sat quiet, holding the vessel in her hands.

"Here, little girl, I have served you. Why don't you drink your milk and go to bed as any sweet girl should?" Lochani asked her. Her eyes moved over the attractive girl and her fine features. "Madam, it is too hot," Sunita replied, blowing into the tumbler.

"Don't blow. You may spill it

all and it is also bad manners."

"Sorry, madam," Sunita whispered and waited for Lochani to move on to the next row of waiting children. When she was out of sight, behind a pillar, Sunita sneaked away to the room where Sidhanta waited for her.

"Here, dear uncle, is the tumbler of milk. Not a drop tasted or spilt!" she told the wise minister, handing over the milk.

Sidhanta sniffed at the milk for a long time. He had a very sensitive nose and he could identify smells even from a distance. The milk gave out a mixture of flavours, and he could at once identify almond and saffron and it was all too tempting! He loved milk, plenty of which was available in Mallipuram. He let a drop of it drip onto his peeping tongue and it tasted so lovely!

"I've work to do, my girl. Open the door only when I knock thus." He knocked thrice fast and twice slowly, like a signal. "Don't open to any other kind of knock. Now go to bed and sweet dreams, Sunita dear! Uncle will wake you up later. Remember the knock."

* * * * *

The parrot perched happily on his hand and lifted its beak at

him. Sidhanta had a way with birds and he could imitate their cries, cooings and billings with which he could attract them to come to him without fear. Many of his friends, including the king, marvelled at his talent to attract birds! He had seen the parrot on the low mango tree in the wide yard of the inn, and had called it with a low cackle. Fluttering its wings it had come to him and made cooing sounds. Gently he fed the bird with the milk, drop by drop. And in a matter of moments, the bird fell fast asleep, on his stretched palm! Sidhanta smiled, and fondling the bird he walked around the inn and the surrounding open space. He pulled at his beard, a sure sign that he was in deep thought.

Sidhanta stared in the darkness and saw the familiar form of Lohadasa. He was a blacksmith, and Sidhanta had seen him at the palace orchard often, talking to Virupa. Virupa worked at the orchard, and was one of the experienced men with loyal service. What was Lohadasa doing at the inn at this late hour? He saw him walking towards him, and he moved into a patch of sheer darkness. Lohadasa did not notice the wise



minister in disguise, and walked ahead. Sidhanta stared. A whiff of expensive perfume surrounded the blacksmith, and Sidhanta wondered: A blacksmith using such a perfume! Then he saw Lochani coming out of the inn and walk towards Lohadasa. And the two disappeared inside the inn. Sidhanta's beard underwent another strong pull!

Quickly he followed them and found the two near the kitchen door whispering in an agitated manner. He could not hear what was being spoken but, moments later, he could see Lohadasa passing over something to Lochani. It was a large bar



which shone even in the darkness. Gold! A blacksmith dealing in gold! And in such a secretive manner, at that odd hour of the night! Sidhanta tiptoed his way out and reached his room. He let the parrot sleep in Sunita's bed, and sat for many hours lost in deep thought.

* * * * *

"Your Majesty, when I saw Lohadasa at the inn, my suspicion was tickled. And then I remembered that he was often meeting our Virupa, and Lochani also behaved oddly. Her looks were evasive and she could not look at me in a guiltless manner. She did not know me, for I was in disguise, and

she could have asked me who I was and why I was staring at her in such manner! Then came the milk episode. When the parrot slept off so quickly, I knew that the health drink was heavily mixed with some kind of sleeping potion. I began to think, Your Majesty, and then I saw Lohadasa and Lochani talking in whispers and the gold bar changing hands! The blacksmith used such an expensive perfume! Normally blacksmiths smell only of honest sweat! I knew he was in some kind of evil conspiracy. Strong sleeping doses in milk given to children, some of them missing from the inn and his meetings with our Virupa and then the pieces of the puzzle fell into the right places. I had Kedara arrest Lohadasa and also Lochani. I examined Virupa too. My lord, you know in our palace orchard we grow a medicinal plant. Its juice is good for giving deep sleep. We give it to our wounded soldiers and men who are in pain."

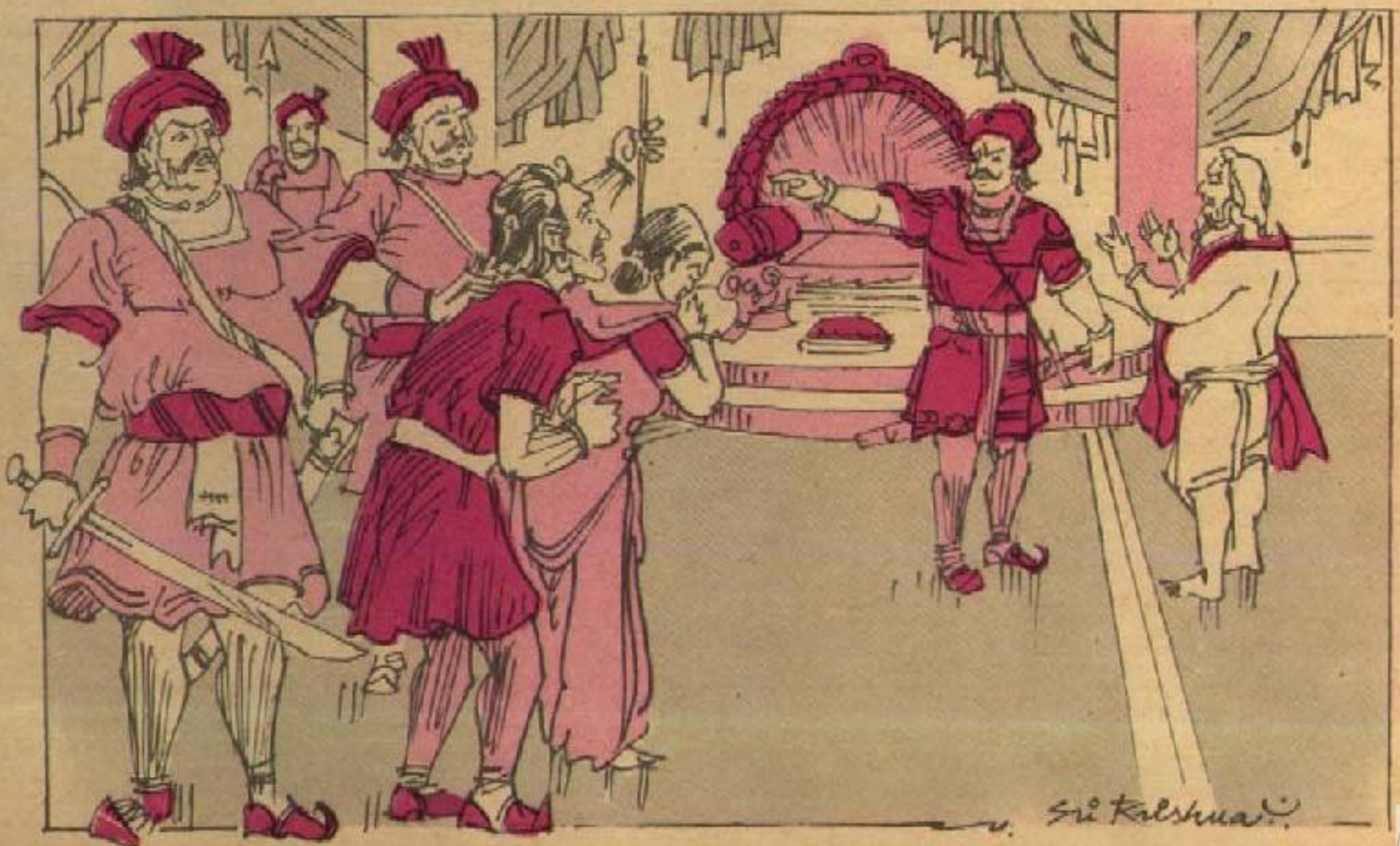
"I know, Sidhanta, I've taken it after I came from that war with Avanti. It is good and beneficial to us. A rare herb! How did that evil-minded Lohadasa get it?" the king asked.

"He stole it from our palace orchard when he came to meet Virupa. Obviously he made friends with Virupa only to steal that medicinal herb. Virupa is too honest and has served you for years. Lohadasa had no choice than to confess. He and that woman were involved in a plot to carry children coming to the inn across our borders to the kingdom of Vakula. Your Majesty knows about the coal mines in that kingdom. These children were taken there to be forced to work as slaves. Lohadasa made good money out of it. No wonder he could afford all that expensive perfume and the gold bars too!" Sidhanta

laughed. King Parakram joined him and embraced him with joy.

"Sidhanta, nobody can escape your vigilance. Let Lohadasa and Lochani be sentenced to long imprisonment. Such persons shall not live in this world. In my kingdom let blacksmiths smell of honest sweat, as you said, I like it that way. Honesty, that's the best perfume a man can exude!"

Lohadasa and Lochani suffered for their misdeeds and the inn at Agravara reported no more missing children. King Parakram and the courtiers showered praise on the wise Minister Sidhanta for his rare talents and skills in solving crimes.



NATURE'S KINGDOM

CAN WE SAVE THE VANISHING ANIMALS?

Rare and strange species have been produced by nature, but unless more efforts are made to preserve them, they are going to become either rarer or completely extinct.

An invitation to dinner in North America in the middle of the last century could have meant that on the table would be a much-liked delicacy—passenger pigeon. This bird lived in vast flocks and, at its nesting sites, every tree for many miles was laden with the nests.

This profusion of food on the wing was an invitation which could not be resisted by the hungry humans. In one year in Michigan and Pennsylvania, 15 million birds were killed for food. No bird could withstand slaughter at such a rate and, by 1888, the passenger pigeon had become almost extinct. The last known survivor died in Cincinnati zoo in 1914.

The passenger pigeon is but one of the many birds which have fallen foul of man. It is a sad fact that 100 species of animals and about 160 varieties of birds have been exterminated by man in recorded history. Most of these have become extinct since the time of Elizabeth I. Now there are over 1,000 animals and 20,000 plants which are in danger of dying out because they are being hunted or collected to extinction or perhaps because their habitats are being systematically destroyed.

Even though their numbers have become so reduced that they may never recover, whales are still being hunted by some countries. Even if whale-hunting were stopped now, whales would still be in danger.

Feared to be nearing extinction is the ivory-billed woodpecker, which was once common in the southern United States and Cuba. It is having a struggle to survive because the forests of great trees where it nests have been cut down.

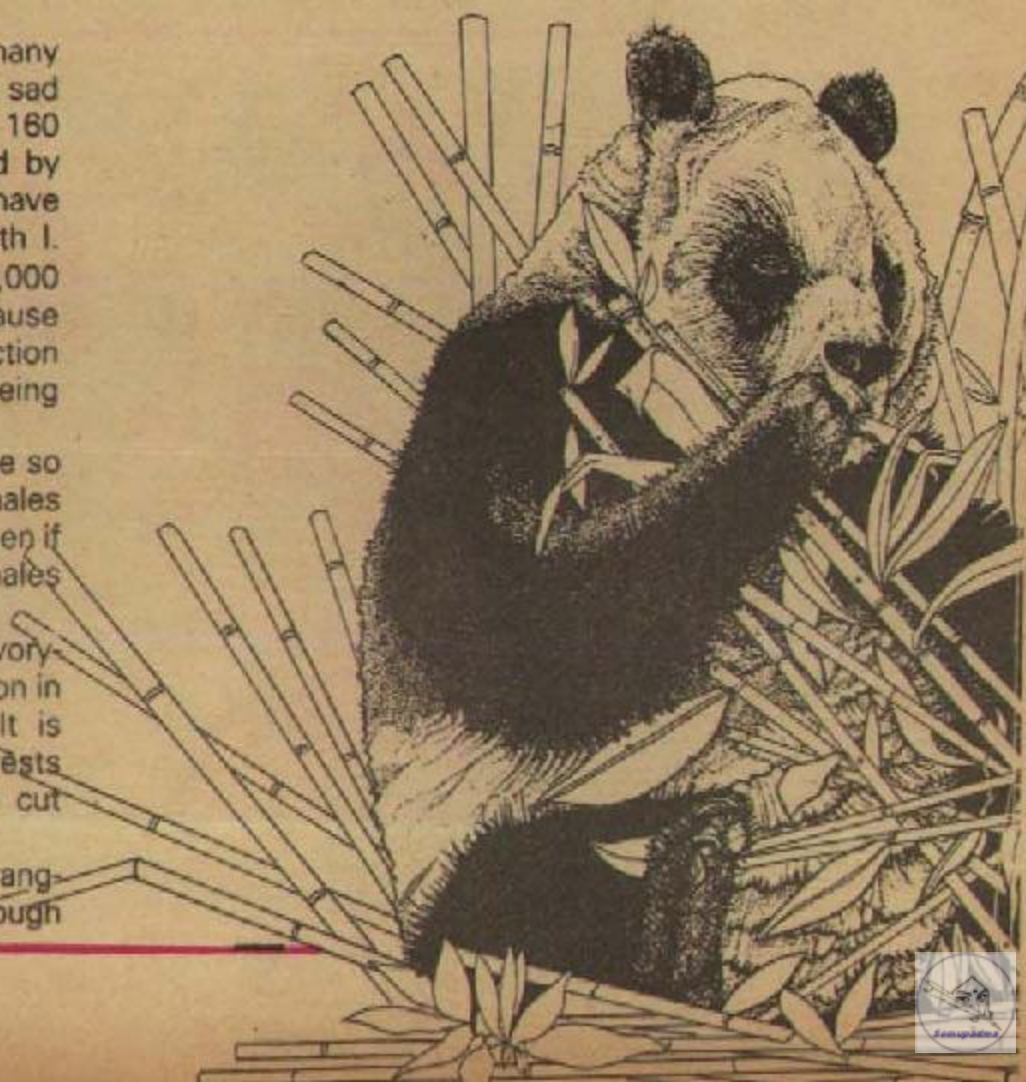
A similar fate threatens the Borneo orang-utan and the jaguar of South America. Although

giant pandas, too, are rare, they are now strictly protected in the bamboo forests of China. All rhinoceroses are still persecuted by poachers, who kill them for their valuable horns.

A victim of the Arabian Sheikhs, who hunt them for sport, is the Arabian oryx. A small breeding herd has been established at the Phoenix zoo in Arizona in order to save them from complete extinction.

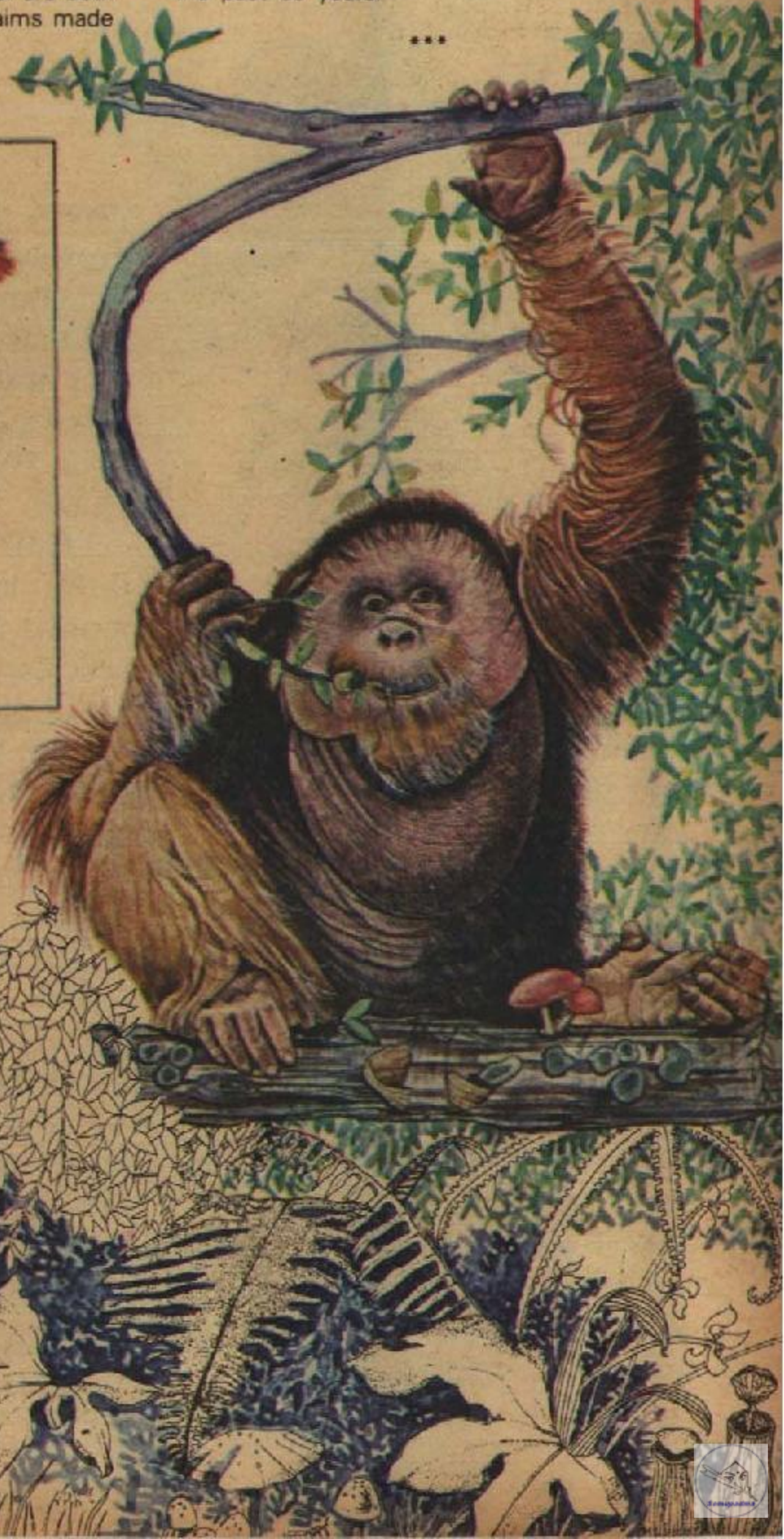
The Hawaiian ne-ne goose had nearly died out in its natural habitat, when it was saved by the British naturalist, Sir Peter Scott. He obtained a few of the remaining pairs and successfully built up a breeding colony at his wildfowl trust at Slimbridge.

For 50 years, the takahe was thought to be extinct in New Zealand. Then, in 1948, an expedition discovered a small colony on the shores of a remote lake on South Island. The birds are now protected by the government and the numbers had increased to about 250 in 1979.



There are several candidates for the title of the rarest creature in Britain. The Scottish wildcat and the little Dartford warbler are both rare. But few would dispute the claims made

for the 19 mm long black and red Eresus spider, which has only been seen three or four times in the past 60 years.





A Folktale from Malaysia

CURE FOR THE KING

dream like?" asked the tiger, growing curious.

"The deity of the forest told me that you can be cured only if you tasted the flesh of every species of the creatures living in this forest," informed the jackal.

"Hm!" The tiger thought over it for a while. Then he summoned the leaders of all the species to a meeting.

All the leading animals came, but not the rabbit. As suggested by the tiger, every leader chose a member of his species and sent it to the tiger to serve as his food.

The tiger ate but a little.

The jackal, his counsellor, feasted on the varieties of flesh for days and weeks.

"How are you feeling, my lord?" one day the jackal asked the tiger.

"Better, I should say, but I'm not fully cured!"

"How can you be fully cured, my lord, since the leader of the rabbits never came or sent any

King of the forest, the tiger, was sick. The bear who was his personal physician gave him several medicines, but the king continued to be sick.

A jackal who lived nearby found in the situation a great opportunity to fulfill one of his old desires. That was a desire to sample the meat of various animals.

One day he braved into the tiger's presence and, offering the king a smart salute, said, "My lord, I dreamt a highly meaningful dream last night, after I had fallen asleep weeping over your sickness."

"Is that so? What was the



member of his species?" observed the jackal.

The tiger was annoyed with the leader of the rabbits and summoned him again.

This time he came.

"Why did you not come when summoned earlier?" asked the tiger.

My lord, I had had a strange dream! But I was afraid of reporting it to you," replied the

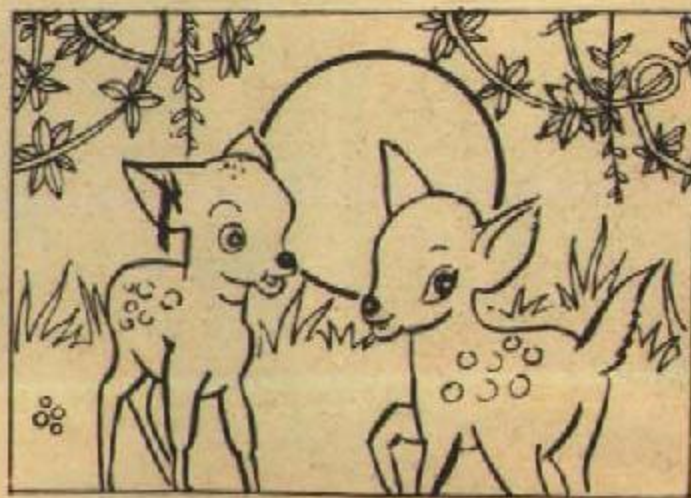
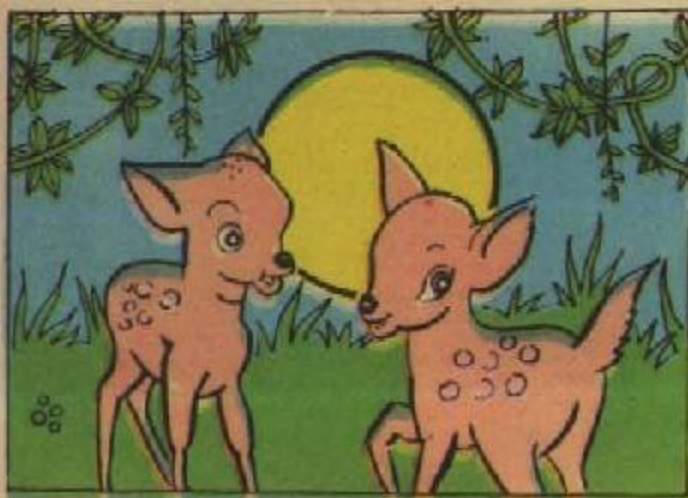
rabbit.

"We order you to reveal it!" said the tiger.

"The deity of the forest told me that the tiger cannot be fully cured as long as he had not eaten up—and eaten up fully—the creature that is nearest to him," said the rabbit.

The tiger pounced upon the jackal at once and left nothing of it save its bones.

WONDER WITH COLOURS



“The Prince and the Pauper”



Tom Canty, a pauper, and Edward Tudor, Prince of Wales, who look alike, have changed clothes. Taken for a beggar, the prince is chased by boys.

The Prince picked himself up and made fiercely at the sentry, shouting: "I am the Prince of Wales. My person is sacred! Thou shalt hang for laying thy hand upon me." The soldier stood at attention and said mockingly: "I salute your Gracious Highness!"



People appeared and crowded round the poor little prince. Hearing what all the commotion was about, they hustled him down the road, hooting and shouting, "Make way for His Royal Highness! Make way for the Prince of Wales!"

After what seemed to be ages of persistent persecution and pursuit, the prince was, at last, left to himself. Not knowing where he was, he wandered aimlessly until he came to a church which was undergoing elaborate repairs. The prince took heart at once, for he recognised the church as one which the king had taken from the monks and given for a home for ever for the poor and forsaken children.





"'Tis Christ's Church," he said aloud. "They will serve gladly the son of him who has done so good to them." He wandered round the building until he presently came across a group of lads playing leap-frog. "Good lads," the prince called out to them. "Please tell your master that Edward, Prince of Wales, desires to speak to him."

"Do you hear that?" one of the boys cried. "We have the Prince of Wales with us. Come and do reverence to his princely rags." With mock homage, the boys bowed to the prince. "Make no fun of me," the prince said sharply. "or I will build you a gibbet!" The boys' laughter ceased. "To the horse pond with him!" cried one. Then rough hands seized the heir to the throne.



The boys relented and did not duck him in the horse pond. Instead, they gave him a final buffeting and sent him on his way. As night drew on, that day, the prince found himself deep in the slums of the city. He wandered on and on until he could hardly go any farther.

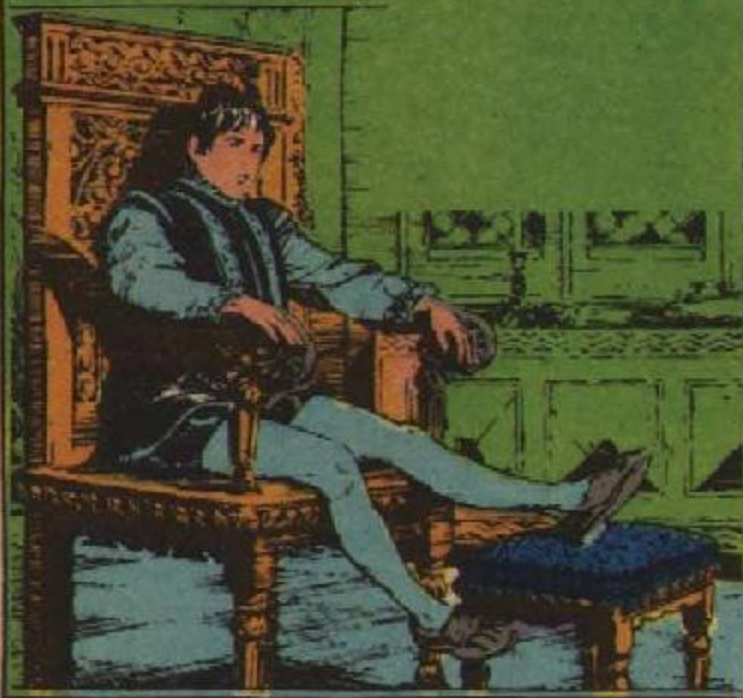
Suddenly a figure appeared out of the gloom, a great drunken ruffian who caught him by the collar. "Out to this time of night, and I'll warrant thou hast not brought a farthing home. If it be so, then I am not John Canty if I do not break all the bones in thy lean body!"





The prince twisted himself loose and brushed his profaned collar. "I am the Prince of Wales," he said coldly. "Take me to the king, my father, and he will make thee rich beyond thy wildest dreams." "He's gone mad," said the man, looking at him stupefied. "But mad or not mad, thou art coming home with me!" With this he dragged the struggling prince away.

Meanwhile, Tom Canty, dressed in the prince's attire and left alone, had made the most of his opportunity to play the prince. He examined the costly ornaments of the room and he tried each of the sumptuous chairs. At the end of half an hour, it suddenly occurred to him that the prince had been gone a long time.



Suppose some one should come and catch him in the prince's clothes, and the prince was not there to explain? Might they not hang him at once? Trembling, he got up from his chair and opened the door to see if the prince was approaching. Instead, he saw several gentlemen clothed like butterflies, who immediately bowed low before him.

Tom stepped back quickly and shut the door. There he stayed, filled now with nameless fears and starting at every trifling sound. Presently the door swung open and a silken page said: "The Lady Jane Grey." The door closed and a sweet young girl, richly clad, came towards him, only to pause when she saw the miserable expression on Tom's face, "Why, what ails thee, my Lord?"



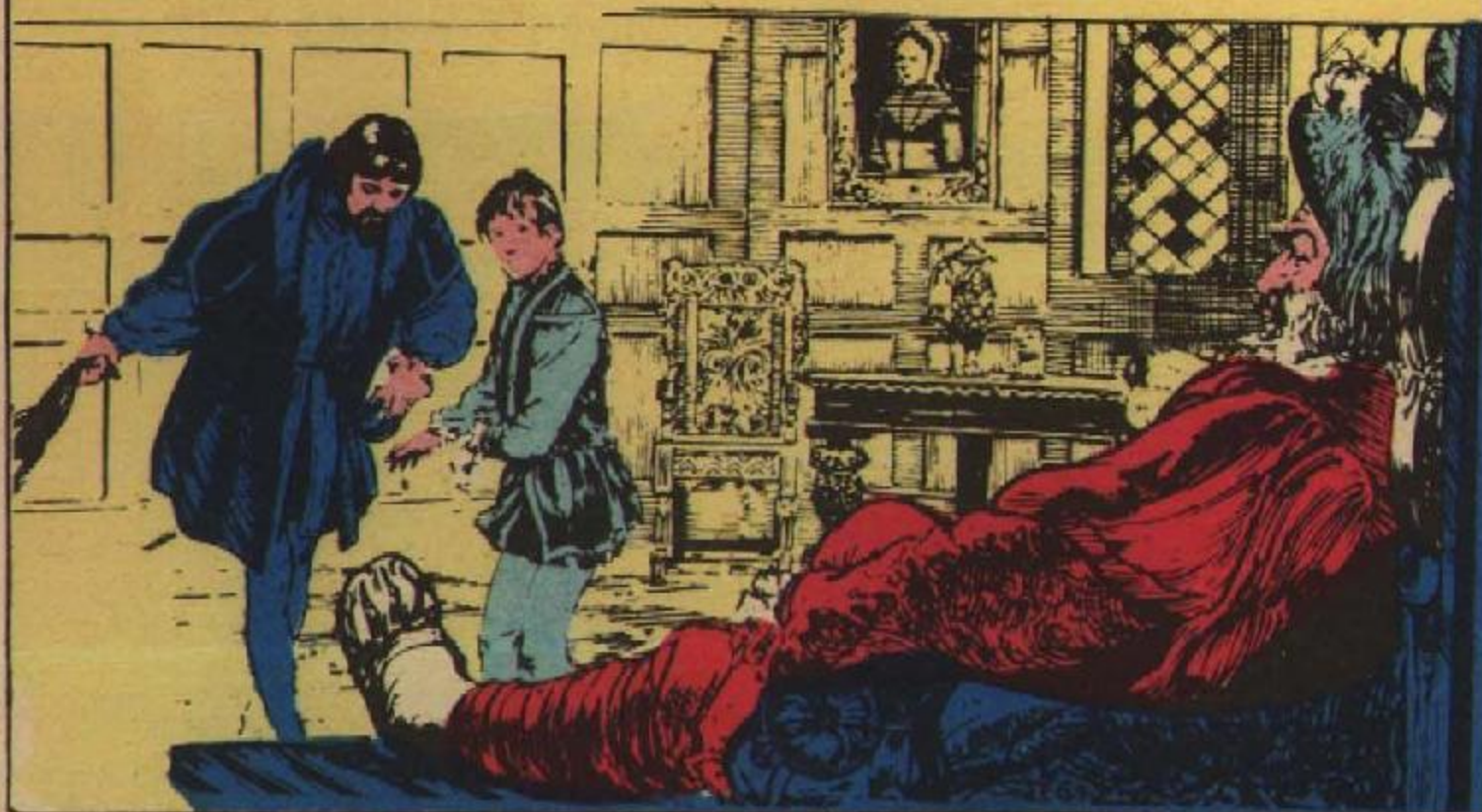
Tom's breath was nearly failing him for fear as he made shift to stammer out: "I am no lord, but only poor Tom Cauty of Offal Court in the city! Prithce let me see the prince, so that I may be restored to my rags!" He fell upon his knees before the Lady Jane. "Be mercifull!" he cried.



"Oh, my lord, on thy knees?— and to me!" Then she fled in fright. Within minutes, she had spread the news about that the prince had gone mad. Suddenly, there was a general buzz along the corridors. "The prince! See the prince comes!"



Unable to stay alone in the room any longer, Tom had ventured forth, expecting the worst. But instead, great nobles walked beside him, seemingly anxious to do his slightest bidding. Presently, he found himself being ushered into an apartment, where a very large and very fat man, with a stern expression, reclined. Tom recognised him at once as the dreaded Henry VIII.



"Listen, My Son!"

Rajesh looked quite upset. This is a mad world where nobody listens to anybody."

"What's the matter, sonny?" asked Grandpa Chowdhury.

"Well, I had so much to tell Bapi and Navin about the picture we saw last night. I could have proved beyond doubt that it was a good picture. But neither of them would pay any attention to what I had to say. They would cut in while I'm at the middle of a sentence!"

"Well, what was their point?"

Rajesh thought for a moment. But was not sure.

"There you are, my son. You too never cared to understand what they had to say. Do you

know the greatest secret of a good conversationalist?" asked Grandpa.

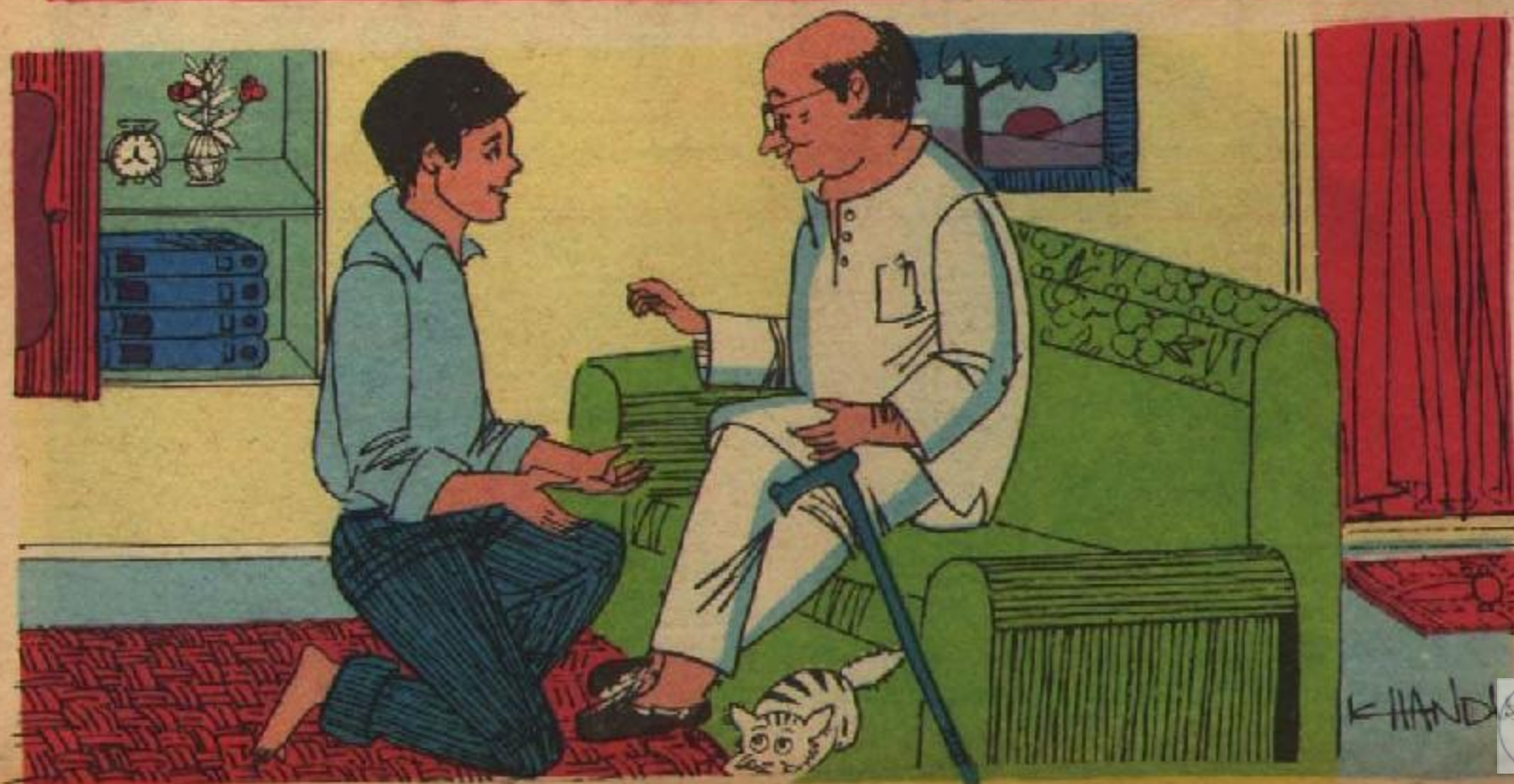
"No!"

"I remember a story. Once a young man requested a sage to tell him how to be an interesting talker. 'Listen, my son,' said the sage, holding up a finger. 'I am listening. Please continue,' said the eager young man. 'There is no more to it' concluded the sage. The story ends here."

Grandpa paused and asked, "Well, did you get the lesson?"

Rajesh nodded. "Yes, the secret of a good talker is to be an attentive listener first!" he said.

"Right, my son."



GIANTS IN THE HIMALAYA?

The year was 1942. The Second World War was in full swing. The world was rocking with blasts of bombs and booming of fighter aircrafts.

Men in those days only thought of other men—friend or foe. They had no time to think of the wide world of nature beyond the ken of 'Civilisation'.

But seven men had managed to escape from the turmoil. They were Slavomir Rawicz and his friends. They had been pris-

oners of war in Siberia. They slipped away. They risked their lives and entered the Himalayas on their way to India.

And they record in their book, *The Long Walk*, a baffling sight they had had somewhere between Bhutan and Sikkim. 12 feet or so below them and about 100 yards away they saw two strange creatures. In the words of Rawicz himself.

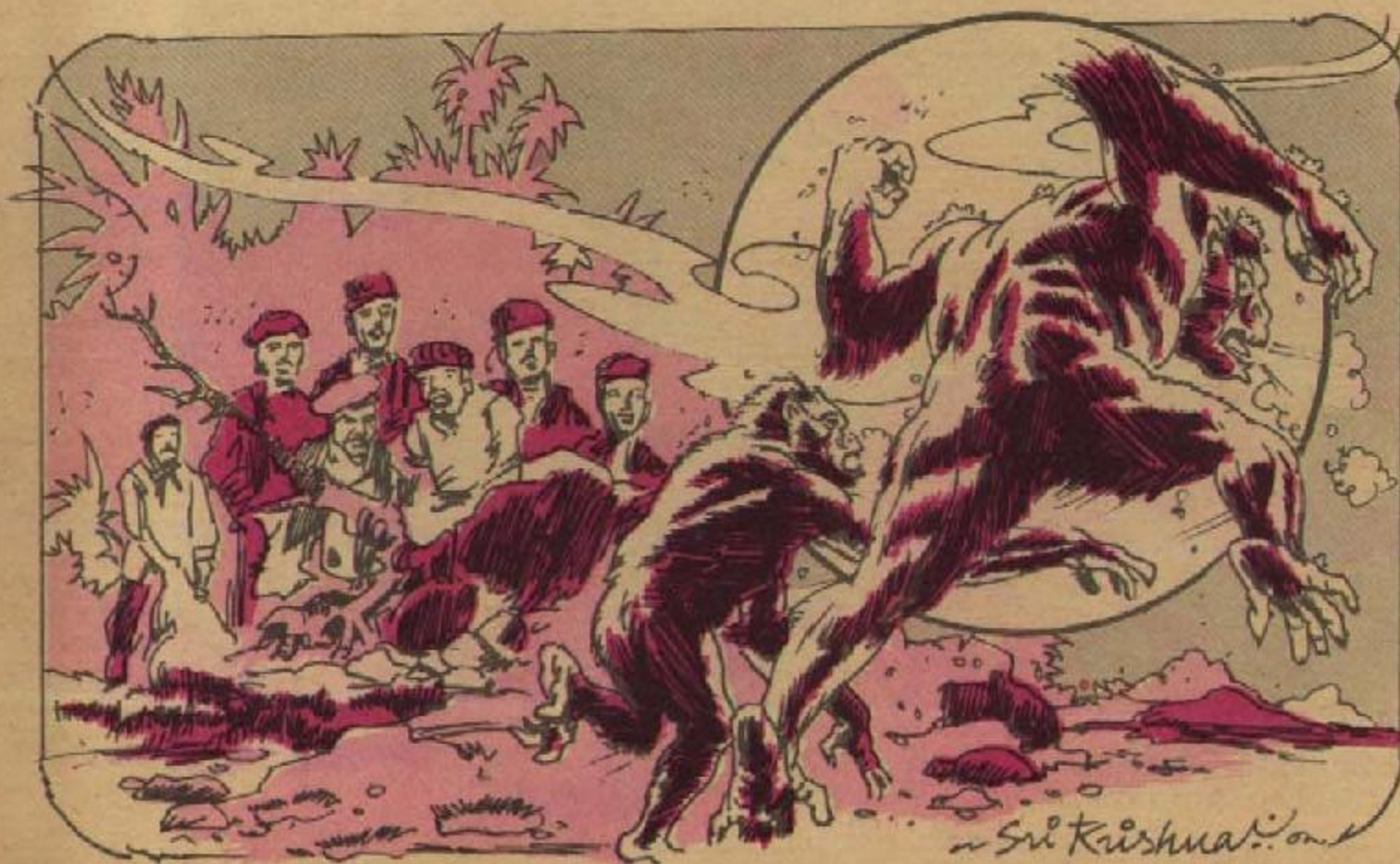
"We just could not believe what we saw at first, so we



stayed to watch ... They could not have been much less than eight feet tall. One was a few inches taller than the other Their faces I could not see in detail, but the heads were squarish and the ears must lie close to the skull because there was no projection from the silhouette against the snow. The shoulders sloped sharply down to a powerful chest. The arms were long and the wrists reached the level of the knees ... We decided unanimously that we were examining a type of creature of which we had no previous experience in the wild, in zoos or in literature ... What

were they? For years they remained a mystery to me, but since recently I have read of scientific expeditions to discover the Abominable Snowman of the Himalayas and studied descriptions of the creature given by native hillmen, I believe that on that day we may have encountered two of the animals."

But the Abominable Snowman is no animal according to the Sherpas, the ancient inhabitants of the Himalayan villages some of which are situated at high altitude. They believe that the Abominable Snowmen—the Yetis as they call them—do live in hidden valleys of the hills and



in inaccessible mountain forests. They are a species of giant-men.

A recent book by Edmund Hillary and Dosmond Doeg, *High in the thin cold air*, gives us interesting accounts of the Yeti tales narrated by Tibetans and Sherpas they have met (Hillary and Tenzing were the first to set foot on Mount Everest; Doeg is a well-known Indian Journalist.)

An employee of the Sikkim ruling family told Doeg how one day in a forest they killed a deer, but forgot to offer its hoofs and entrails to the Yeti, as the Sikkimese tradition demanded. What do you think

might have happened? Says the narrator, "Stones clattered above us, footfalls approached and suddenly the unmistakable stench of the Yeti polluted the air. Stones and bits of wood were thrown with great accuracy, and the unseen creatures set up such a whistling and screaming that it seemed there were hundreds of them. We fled, leaving the deer behind us, and did not stop running until we reached Gangtok."

At a height of 18,000 feet, near a glacier, Hillary and Doeg saw distinct foot-prints, like those of human beings in form, but much bigger.

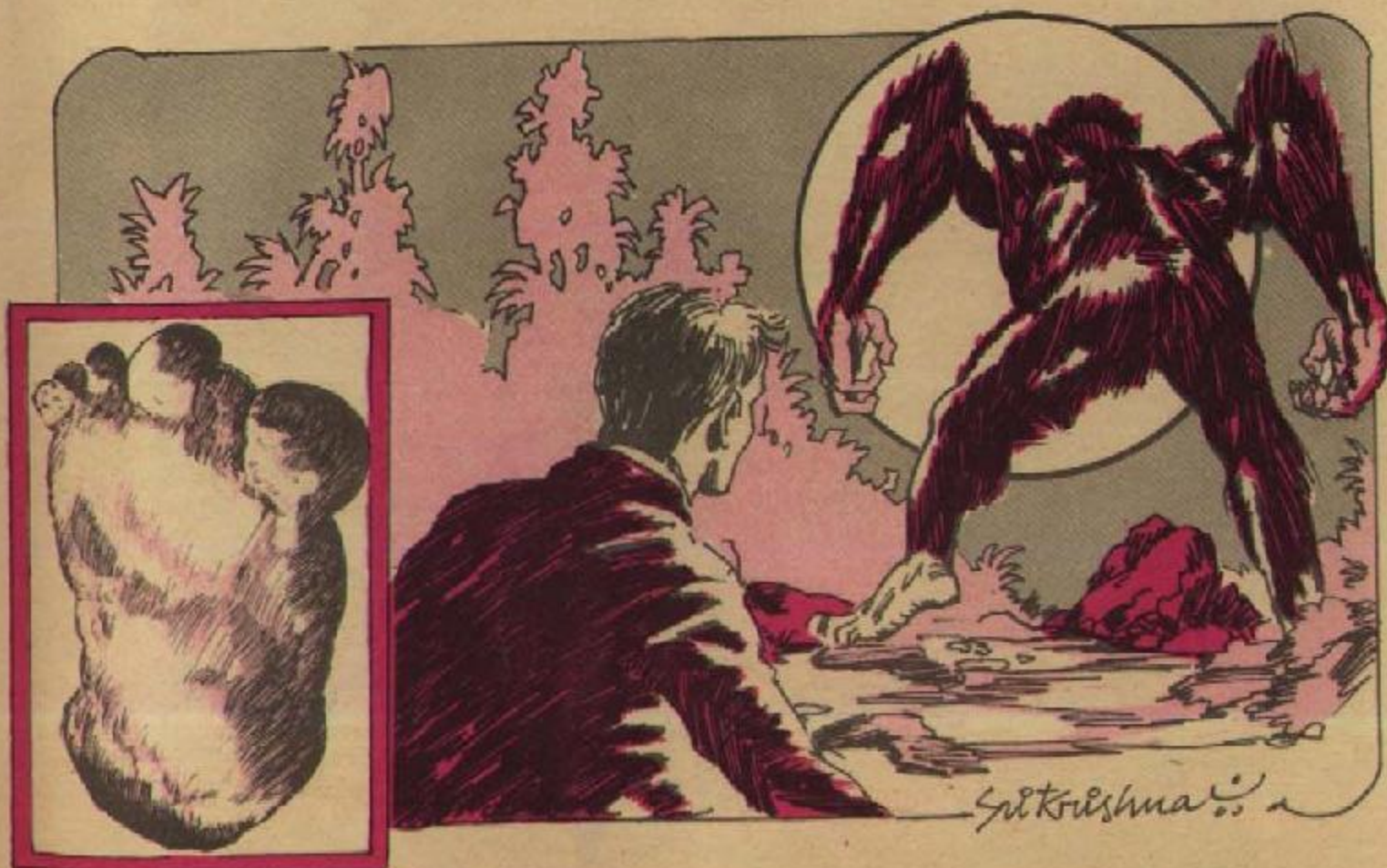


Several other mountaineers and explorers have photographed similar foot-prints, but none of them has been lucky enough to see an Abominable Snowman except perhaps Don Whillams of the British Annapurna expedition. He saw a creature "something between a gorilla and bear" at night. The sight was so unexpected that he was not ready to photograph it. In the morning he took pictures of the foot-prints.

In a monastery situated at Pangboche, on way to Everest, a scalp is preserved. The lamas of the monastery believe that it is of a Yeti.

It is not possible to dismiss the Yeti as purely imaginary. Apart from the photographs of the footprints taken, the strong belief of the inhabitants of Nepal and Tibet about their existence, the evidence of those who have seen some huge creatures, are not yet explained away.

The vast Himalayan region has many unexplored areas within it. Even there are human localities like Zanskar which remain totally shut from the rest of the world. It is not unlikely that there are small areas unknown to men, where some primeval creatures still continue to live.



THE FAKE BEGGAR

Such is the world that often the innocent is punished and the wicked gets away with a reward. Even the impartial judges make grave errors in their judgments," said a blind beggar to a householder.

"Is that so?" asked the householder.

To prove his point, the beggar narrated his own experience:-

In a deserted house lived three blind beggars. Their needs were few. They spent only a

part of the money they received through begging and collected the greater part in a box. They kept the box hidden under a slab of stone in a corner of their shelter.

Over the years they had collected a good amount of money.

One morning they went out for begging. Although they could not see, they knew the roads well by touch and habit. As decided earlier, they met at a certain place at noon.



"Such is my misfortune that I received no alms today," said one of them.

"I received rebukes from a man whose sleep I disturbed," said the second blind beggar.

"Same is the case with me. This is a bad day for us. No use lamenting over it. Let's go home and spend a few coins from our saving and satisfy our hunger," proposed the third beggar.

Their conversation was overheard by a vagabond who quietly followed them. He entered their lodge along with them. When the blind trio brought out their hidden box, he saw it. One of the beggars went out carrying

a few coins and returned with food. As they sat down for their lunch, the vagabond too joined them.

Suddenly one of the beggars asked, "Don't I hear the breath of a fourth man?"

"And don't I hear the sound of a fourth man eating?" observed another.

"A thief! A thief!" all of them shouted.

Passers-by pushed open the door and rushed in. Immediately the vagabond, pretending to be blind, said, "Gentlemen, ours is a complex problem. Only a high officer can solve it. Will you please lead us to the



Kotwal?"

The passers-by found the request quite sensible. They led the four fellows to the Kotwal.

"What's the matter with you?" asked the officer.

"Sir, three of us are blind beggars. The fourth one is a thief who was trying to take away our hard-earned money," said one of the beggars.

"How to know who is the thief?" asked the officer.

"Sir, the thief will not be found unless you use your whip!" said the vagabond who still pretended to be blind.

"Whip them hard!" the officer ordered his henchman.

At the end of the very first round of whipping the vagabond cried out, "Stop, sir, stop! Let me confess that we are not blind. We only pretend to be so. The money we have collected

lies hidden in a corner of our lodge. Kindly allow me to have my share of it. I'll go away and live normally."

The Kotwal and his assistants discovered the box and counted the money and gave a fourth of it to the vagabond. He went away happily.

"Now, fellows, you must confess to your feigning blindness if you wish to have your shares of money," said the officer. The blind trio were whipped again and again, but being really blind, they could not do as demanded by the officer. They forfeited the money and were thrown out of the city!

"Great patience and sympathy are needed to find out what is truth," the blindman who narrated the story said in conclusion.



THE MORTAL WHO MARRIED A NYMPH

Long ago there were many gamblers in the city of Varanasi. But they would take to their heels at the very sight of Somadatta.

Was Somadatta an officer appointed to punish gamblers? No, he was the greatest gambler of them all. The gamblers were afraid of him because to play with him meant losing everything.

Somadatta had grown quite rich. But it was not wealth alone that he desired. He was in love with his gambling.

It so happened that one evening he found nobody to gamble with him. He moved from house to house, challenging the reputed gamblers to have a game or two with him, but if one said that he was having a fever, another sent word that he had guests to attend!

He visited gambling dens. They shut their doors hurriedly.

Frustrated, Somadatta roamed the city alone. The night grew deeper. He was still in the grip of his desire for

gambling.

He did something unusual. He scaled the wall of the Shiva temple and managed to enter the shrine. He sat down before the beautiful images of Lord Shiva and Goddess Parvati and prostrated himself to them and addressed Lord Shiva, "God, will you mind gambling with me?"

No reply came. "Silence is consent," he said and spread the dice before the deity.

"I shall play with my left hand. My right hand shall represent you. If I am defeated, all my property will become yours. If you are defeated, I'll take from your shrine whatever I like," he said.

He began playing. He gave equal attention to both the sides and showed no partiality for himself. Even then Lord Shiva, represented by his right hand, was defeated.

"I'm sorry for you, Lord, but as agreed upon, I must take away something valuable. Let me see ..." With the help of the



earthen lamp Somadatta looked into every nook and corner of the shrine. His gaze got fixed on the image of Goddess Parvati.

"She looks divine! I'll take her and treat her with great respect," he said and got ready to take the image away.

"Have patience, my boy, it is not going to be easy to maintain a Goddess in the house. Hide behind me and wait for a moment. I will give you a gift that will really delight you," said Lord Shiva.

Somadatta bowed down to the Lord and hid behind him.

That was the appointed night for the nymph Tilottama, the

danseuse in Indra's court, to come down from paradise for dancing before the deity. Soon she came and gave a charming dance recital. At its end Lord Shiva said, "Tilottama, there is a young man who has done something inconceivable. In all good faith he believes that he gambled with me and defeated me. He threatened to take away the image of Parvati! I suggest that you marry him."

The Lord asked Somadatta to come out. The nymph had to agree to Lord Shiva's suggestion. They got married before Shiva and Parvati.

A few days passed. One day



Tilottama told Somadatta, "I must pay a visit to Indra's court tonight, for this is the day for me to dance in his court."

"Does Indra gamble?" asked Somadatta.

"I've never seen him gambling," answered Tilottama.

"I cannot let you go in that case. If he detains you I cannot win you back by defeating him in a gambling game," said Somadatta.

Tilottama did not visit Indra's court. Her absence infuriated Indra. He sent his spies to locate and capture her.

Next morning while Tilottama was returning from the Gan-

ga after a bath the spies captured her and whisked her away to Indra. To an angry Indra, the nymph said, "I am no longer free to dance before you as I got married to a man!"

"Married? To a mortal? And without my permission? Be reduced to an evil spirit!"

Instantly the beautiful nymph was changed into a ghastly aerial form.

"You should have given a hearing to me. I married a mortal at the desire of Lord Shiva! Now, I must go back to him and let him know what you have done to me!" murmured the nymph.



Indra got frightened. Shiva's wrath could do havoc for him. He pleaded with Tilottama not to go to Shiva. "The period of the curse will be over once the temple of Shiva has been rebuilt," he said.

Tilottama returned to her husband. Somadatta gave out a shriek of horror and was about to run away when Tilottama spoke to her. It is her voice that convinced Somadatta that she was his wife. He listened to her story patiently.

"The question is how to get the Shiva temple rebuilt so that you recover your true form," said Somadatta.

"I have a plan. You will surely not be very happy with me in my present form. Better I go and possess the princess. No physician will be able to cure her. Then you should go and offer to treat her and say that until the temple of Shiva is rebuilt the girl cannot be completely cured," said the nymph.

Somadatta agreed to it. The princess behaved madly and expert physicians failed to cure her. The desperate king announced that one who cures her would receive an unexpected reward.

Somadatta accepted the challenge. In his presence the prin-



cess behaved almost normally. That impressed the king about Somadatta's power. He asked him to do everything necessary to cure the princess completely.

"My lord, the temple of Shiva is not properly made. It ought to be pulled down and a new temple constructed. That alone will bring complete cure to the princess," said Somadatta.

The king instantly passed order for the reconstruction of the temple. The work was done at great speed.

The day the new temple was to be ceremoniously thrown open to the public, Tilottama appeared before Somadatta in her beautiful form and said,

"Somadatta, now that the temple of Shiva is rebuilt, the curse that lay on me is over. But you must allow me to go back to paradise, for you are going to have a new wife."

Before Somadatta had any time to ask her what she meant, the king summoned him and said, "I had promised an unexpected reward for one who would cure the princess. Do you know what the reward is? The princess herself. Get ready to marry her. Since she is my only child, you become heir to the throne!"

Thus Somadatta in due course became the King of Kashi by gambling with the Lord.

—From *Tales of Prince Madanakama*





STORY OF INDIA-74

DAWN OF MUGHAL DYNASTY

Babur was the prince of Fargana, a small kingdom in Turkestan. Born in 1483, he lost his father at the age of eleven and ascended the throne. He was a descendant of Timur from his father's side and of Chengiz Khan from his mother's side. He was smart and ambitious.

He dreamt of conquering Samarkand, the city of his mighty ancestor, Timur. He led a martial expedition with that aim within a few years of his ascending the throne. The Sultan of Samarkand was 'not prepared to face an attack. He resisted but was on the verge of losing the battle.



While Babur was about to win the battle, news reached him that his own kingdom, Fargana, had been occupied by his enemies. He had to retreat from Samarkand and hurry to Fargana, but he could not enter the territory. He marched upon Kabul, conquered it and camped there.



From Kabul his attention went over to Hindustan. Ibrahim Lodi, the Sultan of Delhi, was a weak ruler. His powerful nobles and officers harassed people and two of his kinsmen, Alam Khan and Daulat Khan, put forth their rights to the throne.

Alam Khan and Daulat Khan invited Babur to invade India. Babur was only too happy to accept the invitation. With great enthusiasm he entered Punjab. He occupied Lahore and then advanced upon Delhi. Ibrahim Lodi got ready to face him, hurriedly bringing together his soldiers and generals.



They met at Panipat. Babur had only twelve thousand soldiers while Ibrahim Lodi had a lakh of them. But Babur's men were well-trained and disciplined. Ibrahim Lodi's soldiers were disorganised and without any able general. Babur was popular with his army. Ibrahim Lodi was unpopular.

Besides, Babur had a great advantage. He brought with him a number of cannons. The Delhi army was not accustomed to facing or fighting with such huge fire-arms. Lodi's soldiers got panicky before Babur's cannon-bursts. Many of them deserted the battle-field.



Emerging victorious in that war, famous in history as the 1st Panipat War (1526), Babur became so happy that he distributed all his wealth among his generals and soldiers. Unlike other conquerors, he did not return to his native land, but made Delhi his home.

Soon he faced a challenge from the most powerful Rajput King of the time, Rana Sangram Singh of Udaipur. In the battle of Khanua the Rajputs fought bravely, but again the deciding factor was the cannon! Rajput soldiers fell by their thousands. Babur won the victory.





Ibrahim Lodi was known to be weak, but the Rana was a brave and strong king. By defeating him Babur established his superiority over all the Indian rulers of the time. He was a lover of literature and seeker after knowledge. His autobiography is a highly valuable book.

Babur's son, Humayun, fell ill. No physician could cure him. One evening Babur circled his bed thrice and said in a prayer, "O God, let my son get well and let me take over myself his suffering and his fate." Surprisingly, Humayun began to recover.



At the same time Babur took ill. His condition deteriorated as Humayun's improved. Babur died in 1530. With him was founded the great Mughal dynasty of India, so called because of Babur's Mongol ancestry from his mother's line. The dynasty continued till 1857.



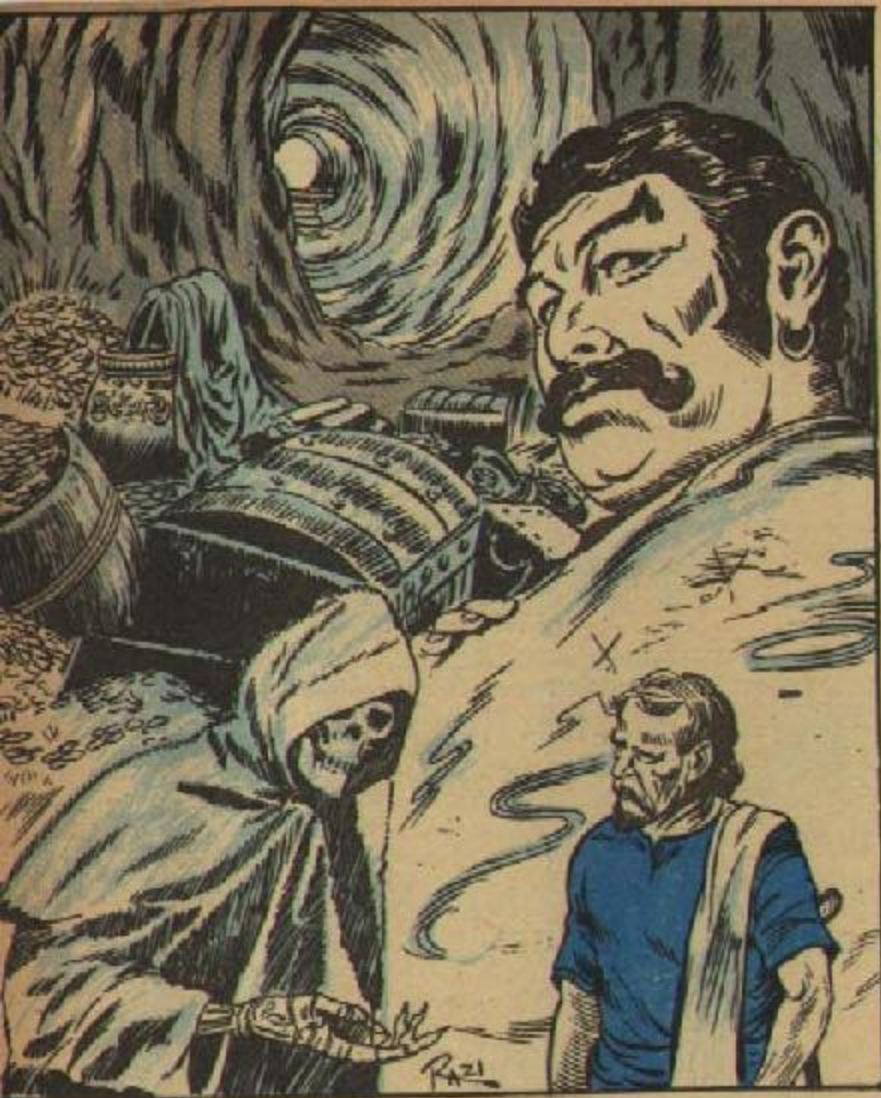
*New Tales of King Vikram
and the Vampire*

THE HIDDEN TREASURE

Dark was the night and fearful the atmosphere. It rained from time to time. At intervals of the roars of thunder were heard howls of jackals and eerie laughter of ghosts.

But King Vikram swerved not. He climbed the ancient tree once again and brought the corpse down. Then, as soon as he began crossing the desolate cremation ground with the corpse lying astride on his shoulder, the vampire that possessed the corpse observed, "O king, I do not know if it is in order to hit upon some hidden treasure that you are performing a certain rite. But you ought to know that there are instances of people turning their back to the call of such treasures. Let me narrate an incident to you. Pay attention to it. That ought to bring you some relief."

The vampire went on: In days gone by there lived a poor man



in a village bordering a forest. He had three daughters and more or less all of them had attained marriageable age. The poor man and his wife were much worried on that account. They needed money for performing the marriage, but they hardly had any.

"You had once been a soldier in the king's army. It is while fighting for the king that you were wounded and you had to retire from the service. If you tell your difficulties to the king, he will help you, I'm sure," the man's wife told him.

The man found the advice quite sensible. He knew the

king to be generous and kind. He proceeded to the city of Pratisthan, the capital of the kingdom, on the other side of the forest.

As an ex-soldier, it was not difficult for him to get an audience with the king. He sought some financial support from the king. But the king said, "I'd have surely helped you in normal circumstances. But we are quite upset about the flood that has devastated fifty villages in the northern part of our kingdom. Only yesterday I announced that no alms, no donations, no contributions should be given to anybody until the marooned villagers had been completely settled. I cannot act against my own policy! My treasury does not have enough wealth to meet this emergency."

"I understand your problem. Thank you, my lord," said the ex-soldier.

He left the capital for his village. It was late in the day and he was tired. Although he had planned to cross the forest before it was dark, he could not do so. What is more, he lost his way in the forest. Instead of taking to the usual short-cut, he meandered deeper and deeper

into it.

A strong wind burst forth and there was a drizzle. He looked here and there for shelter. At the foot of a hillock he saw a house in ruins.

He got into it. A jackal and a wild-cat who were inside ran away at his intrusion. Bats fluttered overhead and he could even hear a hissing sound that might have been a snake's.

A string of lightning dazzled the interior of the room. At once he saw something like a skeleton approaching him. There was no question of his waiting there any longer. He made a dash towards the door.

But another flash of lightning showed that bizarre figure guarding the door against his exit. He stopped. He lost all hope of life, but decided to be brave.

"Don't fret. Though I'm a ghost, I mean no harm to you," said the figure.

"Thanks, I mean no harm to you either. Let me go away," said the ex-soldier.

The ghost laughed. "You cannot harm me even if you wish to. But you can do me good. In fact, I can also do you good—plenty of good. Do you need money?" asked the ghost.

"Yes!" replied the man ea-





gerly.

"How much?"

"Well, if I could get about thirty gold coins, I can perform my daughters' marriages smoothly."

The ghost laughed and laughed.

"Why are you laughing?" asked the man.

"You're too humble. I will put a caveful of wealth at your disposal that might amount to three million gold coins! In exchange you have to do something which anybody can do. You have to perform my funeral rites at the holy seat of Gaya," said the ghost.

The ghost also told him about the origin of the wealth. Two generations ago there lived a terrible bandit-chief in the forest. He commanded a small but well-trained gang and plundered travelling merchants and raided the houses of the wealthy in distant villages and towns. He promised the members of his gang an equal share and collected the booty in a cave. But one day they had an encounter with a battalion of army and all but the leader were killed.

The bandit-chief guarded his wealth hidden in the cave, but could not go out of the forest in fear of being captured. One day he was killed by a tiger, but his ghost continued to guard the treasure.

Years later a traveller was requested by the ghost to perform certain rites at Gaya for his release from the sad and painful state. The traveller did it and returned to the forest. On the eve of his release from his ghostly existence, the bandit-chief's ghost showed the treasure to the traveller.

The traveller was charmed. He built a house close to the cave and guarded the wealth. He died in course of time, but continued to guard the wealth.

It was the traveller's ghost which was now talking to the ex-soldier.

"I'll be happy to do the needful at Gaya. Where is the treasure?" the ex-soldier asked, betraying great eagerness.

"I'd rather like you to finish your work at Gaya first. As soon as you return, I'll lead you to the treasure," said the ghost.

"All right," said the man. When the rain stopped the ghost showed him the way out of the forest. The man forthwith proceeded to Gaya, performed the rites and was back in the forest the next week.

It was evening. The ex-soldier

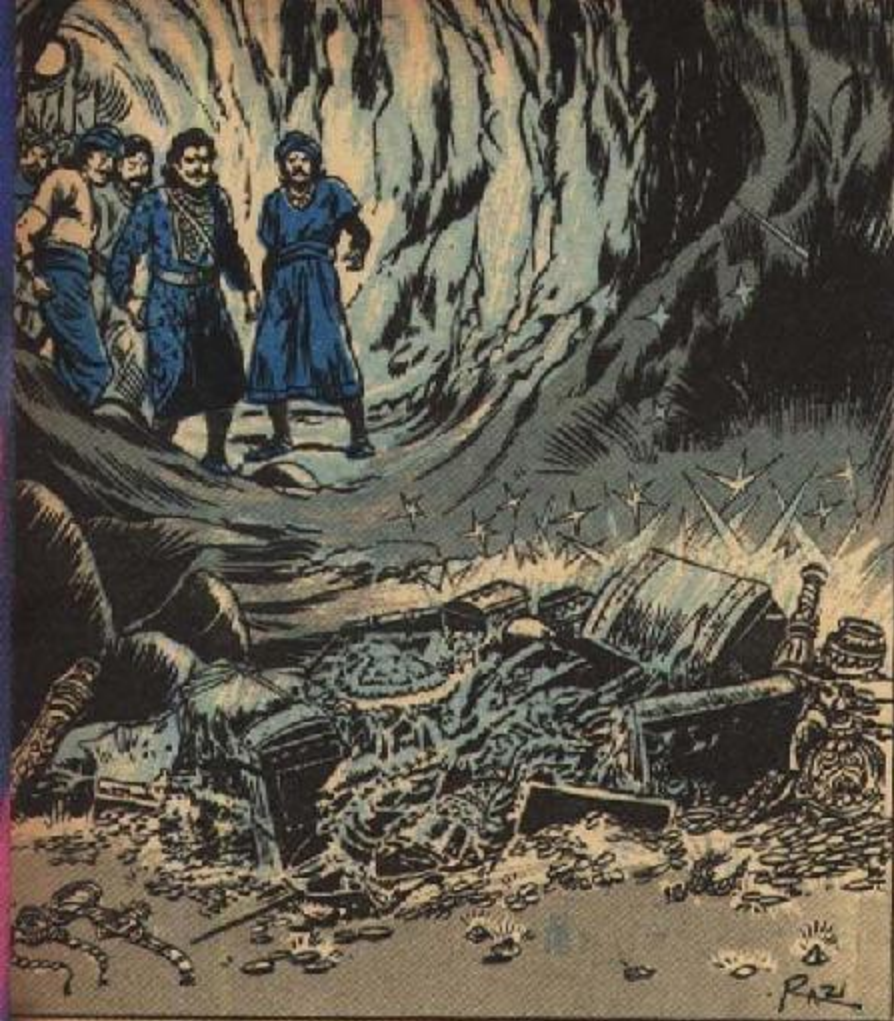
met the ghost on the threshold of the ruined house. "I'm most grateful to you," said the ghost. "I was only waiting for you. Come, I'll show you the treasure and then go away, free from the curse of this ghostly existence."

The man followed the ghost. Behind the house was a cave, its mouth sealed by a huge stone and shrubs and creepers.

"In this cave lies the hidden treasure. I'll presently open it for you."

"Please wait," said the man. "I thank you very much. You need not open it for me," the man told the ghost and turned





back and straight headed towards the capital-city of Pratis-
than.

"My lord, how much money do you need for settling those people hit by the flood?" he asked the king in confidence.

The king was amused at such a question from one who was seeking alms the other day. Nevertheless, he said, "Well, say, two million gold coins!"

"I can give you three million worth of treasure if you come with me," said the man.

The king was surprised. At first he thought that the man had gone mad. But there was a sincerity in the man's tone and

he just could not dismiss him. He followed him into the forest, accompanied by his minister, general, and bodyguards.

The cave was opened and the huge treasure discovered.

The treasure was carried to the palace and arrangements were made for reconstructing the village destroyed by the flood.

"You deserve a portion of the wealth," said the king. "Take it!"

"No, my lord, you spend the entire amount for the people's welfare. How can I take a portion of what is my gift to you?" protested the ex-soldier.

"Then you take from my own treasury!" said the king. He gave fifty thousand gold coins to the man and heaped honours on him.

The vampire paused and demanded of King Vikram in a challenging tone, "O king, I have several doubts. Why should the two fellows who guarded the treasure one after the other when alive, without spending it, lose interest in it as ghosts? Why did the ex-soldier refuse to see the treasure and why did he not possess it himself? Answer me if you can. Should you keep mum despite

your knowledge of the answer, your head would roll off your shoulders!"

Forthwith replied King Vikram, "Men who guard the treasure miserly have always the hope that one day they would spend it in the way they like. Once dead, they realise that the wealth is of no use to their ghostly existence. It is a curse to remain as a ghost without being reborn or finding salvation. Hence they long for freedom through the funeral rites.

"The ex-soldier was a man of sound common sense. He remembered how the ghost had declined to show him the treasure before he had performed the rites at Gaya. It was because the ghost feared that the man might get charmed with the wealth and continue to live there without going to Gaya at

all! The ex-soldier realised that the wealth gathered through murder, arson and making hundreds of people unhappy bears a curse upon it.

"He refused to look at it alone because he saw that the traveller, after seeing it, had been so very charmed that he never left it and was stuck to it even after death. He did not wish the same to happen to him—to be possessed by the wealth instead of being able to possess it!

The proper use of such wealth should be to make the needy happy with it. That is why he wanted it to be used for the distressed people and declined to have any share in it.

No sooner did King Vikram conclude his reply than the ghost, along with the corpse, gave him the slip.



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Mr. Shantaram



Mr. Mohan D. Desai

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—Frank McKinney Hubbard.

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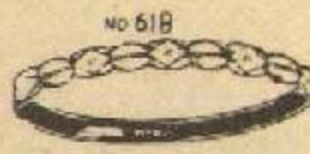
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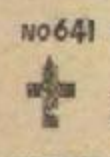
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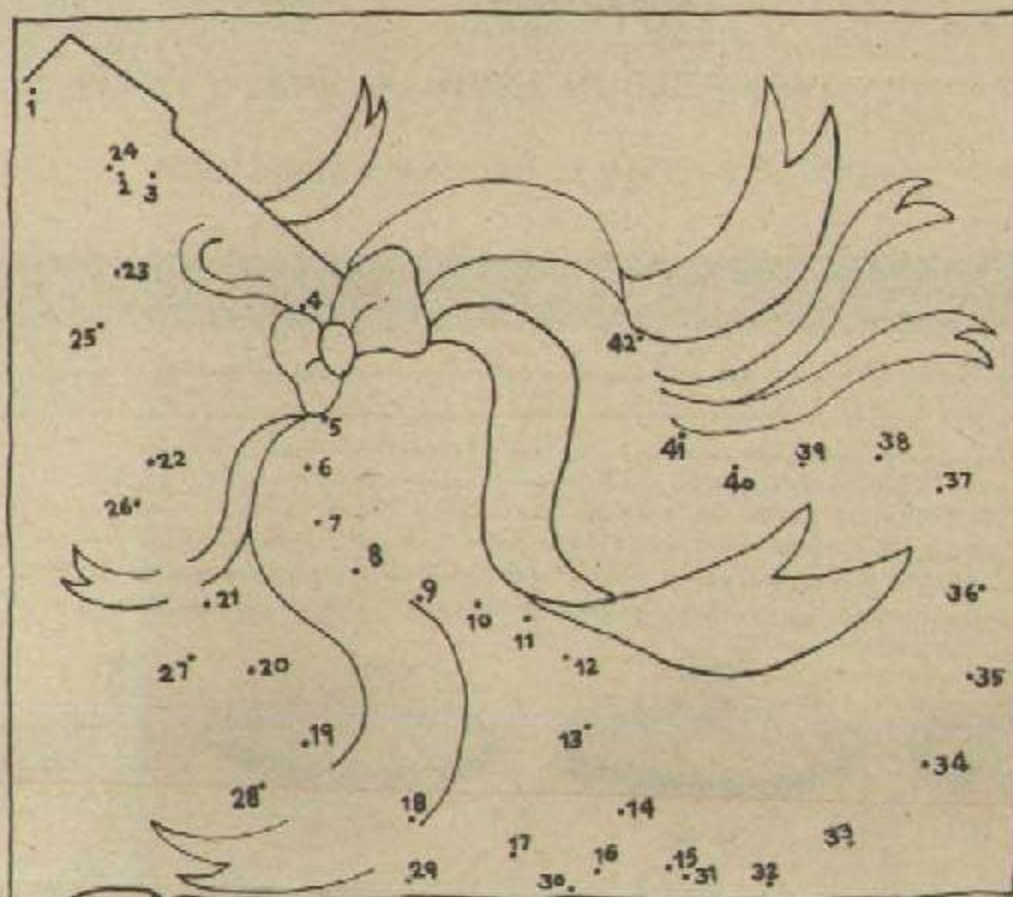
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